



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 7 JUN 2022

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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	06/06 Russia sanctions 61 US nationals
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/world/globaltalk/russia-ukraine-war-the-latest/2022/06/06/id/1073209/

GIST	<p>Russia's Foreign Ministry announced Monday that is levying sanctions on 61 U.S. nationals.</p> <p>It said the move was being taken "in response to the ever-expanding U.S. sanctions against Russian political and public figures, as well as representatives of domestic business."</p> <p>The list includes U.S. officials and former and current top managers of large American companies, such as Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, White House communications director Kate Bedingfield and Netflix CEO Reed Hastings.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 Study: mega-tsunami in Pacific Northwest
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/tsunami-earthquake-pacific-northwest-coast-us-study
GIST	<p>Scientists have long predicted a giant 9.0-magnitude earthquake that reverberates out from the Pacific north-west's Cascadia fault and quickly triggers colossal waves barreling to shore.</p> <p>But what if these predictions were missing an important piece of information – one that, in certain scenarios, could tell an even more extreme story?</p> <p>A new study, published last month in the peer-reviewed journal Earth-Science Reviews, points toward such a missing piece. Researchers revealed a previously unknown relationship between the severity of a tsunami triggered by an earthquake and something known as "the outer wedge", the area between the main earthquake fault and the seafloor.</p> <p>Sylvain Barbot, a co-author of the study, described the outer wedge as the "garbage bag of subduction zones", the place where two tectonic plates crash into each other and can produce an earthquake, because it's where sediment piles up.</p> <p>The researchers' findings suggest that the wider it is, the larger the maximum size of the tsunami will be.</p> <p>The connection adds a new element to consider when making tsunami predictions, one that the authors suggest could mean heightened worst-case scenario predictions for some faults, including Cascadia.</p> <p>"There are places where [the outer wedge is] tiny, so great news," said Barbot, an associate professor in earth science at the University of Southern California. "And there are places where it's huge. And that's the case in the Pacific north-west."</p> <p>For about two years, he and co-author Qiang Qiu, of the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, studied 11 "tsunami earthquakes" that have taken place across the world over the past 200 years. These rare events involve less powerful earthquakes (the authors looked at those measuring 7.1- to 8.2-magnitude) that produce huge tsunamis and have long puzzled scientists.</p> <p>They found a correlative relationship between the maximum tsunami height and the outer wedge. The wider it is, Barbot explained, the more faults there are, the more chances there are to move the seafloor and thus the more extreme the tsunami may be.</p> <p>"Imagine a bookshelf full of books, and you take the books and you tilt them all 45 degrees ... The interface between any book is a fault. And so, in an outer wedge you have all of these books, and all of these faults in between. And they can provide a pathway for the rupture to go up, instead of going left," he explained.</p> <p>From there, they used these findings to make tsunami predictions about dozens of other active subduction zones around the "ring of fire", a nearly 25,000-mile path where most of the world's earthquakes occur.</p> <p>Towards the top of that list was the 600-mile Cascadia subduction zone. It runs from Vancouver Island, Canada, down to northern California, and is poised for its next large earthquake. Its last Big One was in</p>

1700, and current estimates point to about a 15% chance of a 9.0-magnitude earthquake in the next 50 years.

A 2015 Pulitzer prize-winning [New Yorker article](#) brought widespread attention to the subduction zone, describing its next full-scale quake “as the worst natural disaster in the history of North America, outside of the 2010 Haiti earthquake”.

The site, according to the authors, has a fairly large outer wedge (running between 15 and 43 km). According to their research, that suggests that the tsunami triggered by the earthquake could reach higher than 200 feet (61 meters). Although there’s a range of predictions for the Big One, that is roughly twice as high as some of the most severe previously considered scenarios.

When compared with the 30 other subduction zones analyzed by the study’s authors, Cascadia was ranked fifth in terms of tsunami severity. It’s behind such subduction zones as Makran (in Pakistan and Iran), Aleutian (in Alaska) and Lesser Antilles (in the Caribbean), according to the authors.

Barbot explained that the findings need to be further validated, but they could ultimately lead not only to changes in tsunami predictions, but also to emergency preparedness in these regions.

“If you prepare for a 30-meter tsunami, and a 60-meter one comes in, you basically need to double the height of your evacuation zones,” he said. “You need to change where you plan to build the infrastructure, like hospitals and schools. It changes also, in a more practical sense, basically the price of insurance for real estate. It changes the risk, essentially, and how it’s spatially distributed.”

But of course, this outer wedge is not the only variable that can influence the size of a tsunami. There are many other factors that come into play, including the slope of the seafloor and the overall topography.

Harold Tobin, director of the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network and professor of earth and space sciences at the University of Washington, cautioned that while this study reveals an interesting new finding, further research is needed to fully factor in these other variables.

He explained that it would be premature to jump to any conclusions or start modifying how the Pacific north-west or other areas prepare for tsunamis.

“What we need to do is factor in the evidence that this paper has given us to build better models for all of that; to refine and improve the scenarios that are being prepared for,” said Tobin. “But all by itself, it doesn’t mean that we need to suddenly say, ‘OK, there’s double the tsunami hazard as before.’ It just points to one possible mechanism that could mean that the tsunami hazard could be greater than previously thought.”

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HEADLINE	06/07 Russia deploys more troops east Ukraine
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-moscow-411ca8f38524e0d2b120479acef4ad56
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia claimed Tuesday it has occupied large swathes of eastern Ukraine after a relentless, weeks-long barrage and the recent deployment of more troops.</p> <p>Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Moscow’s forces have “liberated” 97% of the Luhansk region.</p> <p>Russia appears bent on capturing the entire eastern Donbas part of Ukraine, which is made up of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. That goal appears to be its most immediate ambition in Ukraine.</p> <p>But while the Kremlin’s forces have superior firepower, the Ukrainians defenders — among them the country’s most well-trained forces — are entrenched and have shown the capability to counterattack.</p>

Shoigu claimed that Russian forces have seized the residential quarters of Sievierodonetsk and are fighting to take control of an industrial zone on its outskirts and the nearby towns.

Sievierodonetsk, the administrative center of the Luhansk region, has recently been the focus of the Russian offensive. Sievierodonetsk and nearby Lysychansk are the only two Donbas cities holding out against the Russian invasion, which is being helped by local pro-Kremlin forces.

Shoigu added that the Russian troops were pressing their offensive toward the town of Popasna and noted that they have taken control of Lyman and Sviatohirsk and 15 other towns in the region.

Popasna is a town with a pre-war population of 20,000 located about 30 kilometers (nearly 20 miles) south of Sievierodonetsk.

A Ukrainian official said Tuesday that Moscow is deploying troop reinforcements in eastern Ukraine as a Russian artillery barrage aimed to grind down Ukrainian defenses.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai conceded that Russian forces control the industrial outskirts of Sievierodonetsk, one of two cities in the Luhansk region still in Ukrainian hands.

“Toughest street battles continue, with varying degrees of success,” Haidai told The Associated Press. “The situation constantly changes, but the Ukrainians are repelling attacks.”

Moscow’s strategy has suffered numerous setbacks, however, since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, including a failed attempt to take Kyiv, the capital.

Moscow’s forces also kept up an artillery barrage of Lysychansk, a city close to Sievierodonetsk which is almost fully controlled by Russian troops.

Haidai said Russian troops shelled a local market, a school and a college building, destroying the latter. Three wounded people were sent to hospitals in other parts of Ukraine, he said.

“A total destruction of the city is underway, Russian shelling has intensified significantly over the past 24 hours. Russians are using scorched earth tactics,” Haidai said.

In all, Ukrainian forces had repelled 10 Russian attacks over the previous 24 hours, according to Haidai. His report couldn’t be independently verified.

Ukraine is receiving weapons and ammunition from the West to help fend off relentless Russian attacks. That assistance has become a target for Russian artillery and warplanes.

Russia claimed Tuesday its forces took out two artillery systems given by the United States and a howitzer supplied by Norway.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said the Russian artillery barrage destroyed other Ukrainian equipment in the country’s east while the Russian air force hit Ukrainian troops and equipment concentrations and artillery positions.

Konashenkov’s claims couldn’t be independently confirmed.

In Kyiv, meanwhile, autopsies were planned on dozens of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks.

The bodies were returned to Ukraine by the Russian occupiers of the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol, where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow’s invasion.

	<p>The Azov Regiment was among the Ukrainian units that defended the steelworks for nearly three months before surrendering in May under relentless Russian attacks from the ground, sea and air.</p> <p>It was unclear how many bodies might remain at the plant.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Military recruitment lags despite incentives
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/us/military-recruitment-lags-record-incentives
GIST	<p>The military touts a "recruit's market" that should attract fresh blood into its ranks as each branch faces recruiting shortfalls following the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>"In real estate, you talk about buyer's and seller's markets," Maj. Gen. Edward W. Thomas Jr., commander of the Air Force Recruiting Service, told Fox News Digital. "You know, this is a recruiting market right now. There are good opportunities to serve and good incentives to do so."</p> <p>The military faced a drop-off in recruitment during the pandemic: Each branch met active component goals, but reserve numbers have fallen short each year. That shortage has now hit the Active component goals for the Army and Navy, with other branches just meeting their goals.</p> <p>One significant factor that Thomas highlighted is the lack of engagement the military could pursue while schools remained remote in 2020 during nationwide lockdowns: A 2018 report by the Institute for Defense Analyses heavily focused on recruitment at the high school level, indicating the high value placed on that pipeline.</p> <p>"Really in the long term ... it's declining eligibility, declining propensity or interest in serving and declining trust in government," Thomas said.</p> <p>"Today, 77% of American youth aged 17 to 24 will not qualify to serve the United States military without a waiver, 77%," he continued. "That's based on a variety of different reasons, from weight to medical issues to academic issues to behavioral issues, mental health issues. It's a wide variety with 77% don't qualify without a waiver."</p> <p>And Thomas admitted that the perception around the military withdrawal from Afghanistan may have impacted recruitment in the last six months, but stressed that he would not consider it "one of the primary drivers."</p> <p>The drop-off forced the military to reduce their goals, which they were able to do thanks to higher-than-usual retention.</p> <p>"Back in 2020 and '21, we did reduce our recruiting goals slightly because retention was high," Thomas said. "We have not seen that in wanting to."</p> <p>"What we saw when COVID hit, we had record high retention in the Air Force and I believe across the body," Thomas explained. "You know, frankly, it just wasn't a great time to transition out into the civil sector to be looking for a job. With all the uncertainty both in the market and people's personal lives with COVID, retention was high."</p> <p>Thomas argued that the job market continues to play a major factor in the recruitment equation. With the nation facing its highest level of employment in 50 years, the military faces "fierce" competition with the general job market. The rate of unemployment spiked early in the pandemic but has since then returned to around 3.5%</p> <p>"It's good for the nation in general," he said. "It makes the battle for talent all that much more ferocious." To try and compete with that healthy market, the military has offered larger-than-usual bonuses, including up to \$50,000 for certain fields, such as special warfare. Other fields for "hard to fill jobs" have incentives</p>

ranging from \$3000 to \$6000. The main goal is to keep trying to attract the best of the best, including varsity athletes, candidates with multiple language proficiency or candidates with expertise in niche fields including crypto.

Part of the problem may be due to the lack of understanding when it comes to the kinds of roles available in the military. In just the Air Force alone, Thomas noted that there are "about 130 enlisted career fields." "Almost anything you can do in a major city, maybe other than being a stockbroker, you know, or a few select jobs you can pretty much do in the Air Force," he explained. "So all of the peripherals that we recruit for, we're recruiting for medical, for radiology technicians, for dental technicians ... you name it."

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HEADLINE	06/07 Gas prices climb 5 cents overnight to \$4.92
SOURCE	https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/gas-prices-overnight-america-paying-more-biden
GIST	<p>Gas prices are still on the rise and could soon reach \$5 per gallon, a figure that has forced some Americans to rethink their leisure travel.</p> <p>The national average gas price climbed five cents Monday night into Tuesday and 10 cents since Saturday, now hitting a record \$4.92 per gallon, according to the American Automobile Association.</p> <p>Americans are paying \$1.87 more than they were just a year ago, when the price was \$3.05, per the AAA.</p> <p>According to an industry expert, the price for a gallon of gas could touch or surpass \$5.00.</p> <p>Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates, told FOX Business that the hurricane season could disrupt oil production, further driving up the price of gas.</p> <p>"A major storm making landfall along the Gulf Coast, where 15% of the nation's oil production and over 45% of the nation's refinery capacity is located, can result in a significant supply disruption sending prices even higher," Lipow said.</p> <p>The hurricane season started June 1 and runs until November 30.</p> <p>Summer travel and subsequently high fuel demand could further impact the price point, Lipow said.</p> <p>As for the cause of the new record, economist Steve Moore said the still-surging price is the result of President Joe Biden's own "self-inflicted wounds."</p> <p>"This is a result of policies that were implemented," Moore continued. "These are self-inflicted wounds that are not a result of COVID. But in fact, because COVID's basically over, we should be seeing less inflation, better growth."</p> <p>"I'd love to see President Biden say, we're going to work toward a pause on the climate change craziness, and we're going to continue to drill and to get American oil and gas. I think that would start to bring that oil price down," he said during an interview on "Varney & Co.," Monday. "I was looking at those charts you were showing earlier on the show, and it was amazing because, I think you said it was \$4.45 a gallon for the national average for the gas price, it was about \$2.39 or so a gallon the day that Joe Biden took office. So do the math there. That means that we've got a doubling in the gas price in 15 months."</p> <p>During a speech last month, Biden remarked the U.S. has "made enormous strides" in recovering its economy — and credited his own policies — while he blamed inflation and record-high gas prices on the coronavirus pandemic and Russian President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>"I want every American to know that I'm taking inflation very seriously and it's my top domestic priority," Biden said at the White House on May 7.</p>

	<p>"I want us to be crystal clear about the problem," Biden added.</p> <p>He continued, "There are two leading causes of inflation we're seeing today. The first cause of inflation is a once-in-a-century pandemic. Not only did it shut down our global economy, it threw the supply chain and demand completely out of whack."</p> <p>"These supply challenges have been further hampered by the onset of Delta and Omicron viruses. And you've all seen it and you've all felt it," Biden added.</p> <p>"Some of the roots of the inflation are outside our control, to state the obvious," he also said.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Groups behind violence in West Bank
SOURCE	https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/06/analysis-understanding-the-militant-groups-behind-the-violence-in-the-west-bank.php
GIST	<p>After clashes with Israel Defense Forces (IDF) troops in the West Bank village of Ya'bad last week, the Fatah-linked Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades issued a statement mourning the death of one of its militants, Bilal Kabaha. Kabaha's killing signals an upward trend of militant activity in the West Bank since last year.</p> <p>There are several reasons behind the onset of violence in the West Bank, particularly in Jenin.</p> <p>The cancelling of Palestinian elections and the May conflict in Gaza last year were the initial catalyst for the violence. Adding to that was the escape of six militants (most of whom are members of PIJ) from a prison in northern Israel in September, just across the line from Jenin, which rallied fighters across the Palestinian territories. Lastly, IDF operations in the West Bank throughout 2021 resulted in an unusually high number of militant deaths exacerbating the already mounting tensions.</p> <p>Ultimately, it was likely the killing of a significant number of militants last year that motivated terrorist organizations in the West Bank to reorganize and establish a joint operations room. Groups such as Katibat Jenin (Jenin Unit), Hizam al-Nar (Belt of Fire) and Katibat Nablus (Nablus Unit) were formed and resulted in a marked increase in clashes with IDF troops. Though, it is unclear if the initiative to form these umbrella groups was directed from a local level or abroad (Gaza, Lebanon, Turkey).</p> <p>Of these groups, <i>FDD's Long War Journal</i> has identified five Palestinian militant organizations who have issued statements identifying their affiliation with the newly established formations or have claimed responsibility for attacking IDF troops with these groups.</p> <p>Katibat Jenin and Katibat Nablus are led by Palestinian Islamic Jihad while Hizam al-Nar is headed by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.</p> <p>Hamas, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine are active in these formations but play a smaller role. While all of these groups have their own political movements and so-called military wings, they operate under the Katibat and Hizam al-Nar organizations as a single unit to combat IDF operations.</p> <p>A similar model has been employed in Gaza with the joint operations room of the Palestinian factions. Approximately a dozen militant organizations operate under the Hamas-led operations room umbrella during times of conflict against Israel.</p> <p>Evidence of the new formations was highlighted in a recent VICE News segment in May. At the beginning of the video, four of the previously mentioned organizations can be seen conducting a training operation in Jenin. <i>VICE News</i> did not specifically mention the name of these groups, however, <i>FDD's Long War Journal</i> identified them by the bandanas worn by the fighters.</p>

	While clashes in the West Bank with militant groups have clearly been on the rise for more than a year, the IDF has yet to publicly acknowledge the new and aggressive approach the nascent organizations have undertaken against them. It's unclear if this is due to not wanting to publicly reveal the significant escalation in the West Bank by Palestinian factions or an unwillingness to credit the groups for organizing a somewhat effective method of so-called resistance operations against the Israeli military.
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HEADLINE	06/06 Hospital association urges indoor masks
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3506381/covid-hospitalizations-rising/
GIST	<p>State hospital leaders are alarmed at the recent rise in COVID hospitalizations.</p> <p>Speaking at a media briefing on Monday, Washington State Hospital Association CEO Cassie Sauer said COVID hospitalizations had increased 10% in Washington in just the past week.</p> <p>“[That] is a pretty big growth,” Sauer said.</p> <p>It was the first time in three months the Washington State Hospital Association held a briefing, a sign of the virus numbers ramping back up. During previous COVID waves, briefings were held sometimes as frequently as once per week.</p> <p>“I’m sorry to say that we are back here today to talk to you about COVID,” Sauer began the briefing. “I’m sorry to say it because we really would like to not have to talk about COVID.”</p> <p>Sauer said the end of last week reached nearly 600 COVID hospitalizations, with another 75 suspected cases. In comparison, she noted that April saw an average of 230 COVID hospitalizations on any given day.</p> <p>“Right now, we’re in the ‘very concerned’ stage,” she said.</p> <p>For this reason, the WSHA is asking people to wear masks indoors again. Sauer also encouraged people who suspect they have COVID to get a PCR test in addition to a home test because PCR tests are more accurate.</p> <p>At this point, hospitalizations still remain far below the omicron wave over the winter and the delta wave last summer.</p> <p>“The good news on COVID is that most people are not getting as sick from COVID as they were in the past,” Sauer said.</p> <p>This is due to a variety of reasons, she noted.</p> <p>“This variant [BA.2] seems to not make people quite as sick. We have a high vaccination rate — and vaccination definitely protects people from severe illness, hospitalization, and death,” she said. “And we have a better understanding of the disease and more effective treatments available.”</p> <p>Still, hospital leaders are worried about medical facilities getting overwhelmed again, as in previous waves. For many hospitals, there is already not much of a buffer for a COVID increase.</p> <p>“Right now, across the Puget Sound, we are running about 120% of our normal capacity,” said Dr. David Carlson, chief physician officer for MultiCare. “And yet only a fraction of that is due to COVID.”</p> <p>Some of those patients are people who delayed routine care during the pandemic and are now discovering problems at more serious stages.</p>

	<p>Other patients are ready to be discharged to a long-term care facility, but remain in hospitals taking up beds because they cannot get a place.</p> <p>“By and away, the number-one issue facing our health care system now remains the inability of our patients to be able to transition to that post-acute care setting, such as a skilled nursing facility or nursing home,” said Dr. Stephen Mitchell, medical director of Harborview’s Emergency Department.</p> <p>Some people are not able to get into nursing homes because those facilities are understaffed. Others are held up by legal red tape, an ongoing issue in Washington.</p> <p>“If you don’t have Power of Attorney, but you have a spouse or adult child with you in the hospital, by virtue of being next of kin in the state statute, they can make major, major decisions for you,” Sauer said. “They can consent to massive surgery, they can withdraw life support treatment ... but for some reason, our state has decided they cannot consent to move [you] to a nursing home, and that a court-appointed guardian must be named. We believe we are the only state in the country that has this interpretation.”</p> <p>The Legislature state set aside money this past session to speed up the paperwork process, but did not change the guardianship law.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Large storm systems threaten central US
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2022/06/06/windy-thunderstorms-plains-states/
GIST	<p>With summer heat building, it’s the season of “mesoscale convective systems,” or large, often intense, long-lived thunderstorm complexes. For residents of the central United States, this means a daily chance of torrential rain, strong to locally damaging winds and occasional hail and tornadoes.</p> <p>These systems, which can cover an entire state, also have the potential to incite flash flooding. It is often challenging to predict exactly where these systems will develop, decay and regenerate and how strong they’ll become.</p> <p>The National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center has declared an elevated risk of severe thunderstorms in the central states daily through Friday, largely because of the potential for these systems. The Weather Service has also placed large parts of the central United States in an elevated risk zone for excessive rainfall through at least Wednesday.</p> <p>In addition to damaging winds and heavy rainfall, these systems can generate tremendous amounts of lightning and have set records for “megaflashes” — or bolts spanning hundreds of miles.</p> <p>A mesoscale convective system starts as a single thunderstorm cell or a broad cluster that becomes organized and bows out into a curved line. Thunderstorm downdrafts all interact to produce a single outflow boundary — or the leading edge of cool-air exhaust exiting the storms — as a squall line evolves. The squall taps into jet stream energy from aloft, usually moving parallel to or to the right of the upper-level winds, and transfers that momentum to the surface in the form of damaging wind gusts.</p> <p>The surge of winds pushes the middle of the thunderstorm complex outward, causing the entire line to take on its signature backward-C shape.</p> <p>It’s not unusual for widespread winds of 60 to 80 mph to accompany an MCS, along with prolific lightning. Most MCSs rage all night long before dying around sunrise as the low-level jet stream, which helps fuel the thunderstorms, weakens.</p> <p>Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setup and hazards: A contrast between dry air banked over the mountains to the west and gulf moisture streaming north over the Plains will brew strong to severe thunderstorms. Wind shear, or a change of wind speed or direction with height, favors supercells. Those supercells could produce

damaging straight-line winds, hail as large as pool balls and a few tornadoes. Eventually, storms may merge into another MCS that will shift east with time overnight and bring strong winds. A few strong thunderstorms could fire as far east as Memphis along Interstate 40.

- **Areas affected:** The central High Plains will once again be affected, with a Level 2 out of 5 severe storm risk drawn for parts of the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, western Kansas and western Nebraska. Liberal, Garden City and Colby, Kan.; and McCook, Kearney and North Platte, Neb.; and much of Interstate 80 are within that risk zone.

Wednesday

- Hail-producing supercells developing over the southern Plains could combine to form another MCS during the evening. A Level 1 out of 5 risk of severe weather covers the zone from roughly Pueblo, Colo., into northeast New Mexico and adjacent parts of the Texas Panhandle.
- A second Level 1 risk area has been drawn from northeast Oklahoma east through Arkansas and southern Missouri into western Tennessee and northern Mississippi and Alabama. Here, an MCS could be ongoing in the morning and strengthen with the rising sun.
- The remnants of this MCS could reach the Mid-Atlantic on Wednesday night, but confidence is low.

Thursday and Friday

- For Thursday, the Storm Prediction Center wrote that “a severe MCS appears likely to develop somewhere across NE/KS and shift southeast into OK overnight.”
- An elevated risk of severe weather covers most of Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, including much of the heavily populated Interstate 35 stretch. Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Woodward, as well as Wichita, Colby, Hays and Garden City, Kan., and McCook and Hyannis, Neb., are included in the risk.
- On Friday, re-intensification of Thursday night’s MCS, or redevelopment near a weak low pressure swirl left behind by the storms, is expected. The environment would support severe weather.
- An elevated severe weather risk Friday covers the zone between Little Rock and northwestern Alabama, including Huntsville, Birmingham and Hoover, as well as northern Mississippi.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Climate change toll on mental health
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/environment/2022/06/climate-change-takes-toll-seattleites-mental-health
GIST	<p>On a gray and windy Saturday morning, passengers aboard the Admiral Jack looked out the windows of a small powerboat over the Duwamish River at a set of houses in South Park.</p> <p>“So far, it is actually the only [Seattle] neighborhood that has been categorized as being in danger of being for high sea level rise,” said Paulina López, executive director of the Duwamish River Community Coalition, during an educational tour of the river. “Having a river, it’s beautiful, but it’s like having a piece of chocolate we can’t enjoy. It’s there, but you don’t feel safe.”</p> <p>The flood-prone, polluted waterway is a federally designated Superfund site resulting from the toxic chemicals left by industry along the river’s shores. Today, the Duwamish River faces yet another threat that not only causes more environmental harm but also brings climate stress and grief to the people who live nearby.</p> <p>Some South Park residents are already familiar with that environmental grief. For them, climate stress manifests in the embarrassment, frustration and anxiety they feel when wastewater floods back into their homes during high tides and heavy rains.</p> <p>The city of Seattle projects 2 to 4 feet of sea level rise by 2100 in South Park between Marginal Way and the river. Nearly 300 properties, including homes, businesses, and parks, are within that area. This means</p>

that increased water levels brought by winter storm surges and high tides that usually happen once a year will become monthly occurrences, according to [Seattle Public Utilities' 2019 resiliency assessment](#).

Sea level rise is already causing frequent tidal flooding, because it often coincides with extreme rainfall and [insufficient drainage](#) from the neighborhood's combined sewer overflow systems, which direct large amounts of excess water into nearby waterways. Sometimes the system, which is now considered an antiquated design, gets overwhelmed. In those cases, rather than draining away from a home, the sewer line pushes waste back through the plumbing.

Eighteen homes in South Park are hooked in to the county's combined sewer system, which floods during the Duwamish River's high tides and heavy rain. Robin Schwartz, who lives in the neighborhood, said many of her neighbors find standing wastewater in their basements at least once a year. Those floods contain untreated human waste, as well as harmful viruses and bacteria that can [remain in people's homes for a month](#) even after the water is gone.

King County is [designing a new](#) stormwater and wastewater tank for mitigation in South Park, with construction scheduled for 2025. Meanwhile, Schwartz and her neighbors bear both the emotional and financial stress that comes along with the flooding.

"My neighbors who are low-income, people of color and immigrants, they are left to clean it up," said Schwartz, who leads the Duwamish River Community Coalition's development and advocacy program. "Climate change is becoming more and more of an issue with heavier rainfalls and way more flooding events the last few years. It's absolutely chronic."

Climate change and stress

Several names have emerged to describe the mental health implications that come with a changing planet: climate anxiety, [solastalgia](#), eco-anger.

Climate stress affects everyone's nervous system differently, according to Emily Wright, founder of [We Become](#), an environmental justice organization. In their work, Wright, who's also an adjunct professor in Seattle University's environmental science and psychology departments, explores how climate change affects emotional health, especially among people who disproportionately experience flooding, extreme heat and pollution.

To better understand this, Wright developed the [Climate Stress Response Map](#), a framework that ties emotions to how the nervous system perceives a threat. Where people land on that spectrum depends on various factors, including lived experience, race, gender, class and ability. A natural disaster could trigger a person's fight response, which could result in getting involved in a social movement, or it could cause someone to disassociate because of stress and ignore the situation.

"I talk about climate trauma because it's traumatic, and not only with huge events and acute moments of extreme heat and flooding, but it's also just living with it," Wright said. "It just increases the baseline level of stress."

Many in Seattle already experience challenging emotions during the darker, rainier months from October to July that some have come to call "The Big Dark."

Nearly 30% of people in Seattle reported experiencing anxiety and depression in 2021, according to the latest annual report from the National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau, which sought to gauge households' emotional response to the pandemic.

Data for 2022 until May show a similar trend, with 28% of respondents reporting symptoms for the year so far.

January and February 2021 hit a high of 46% reporting anxiety or depression. While [seasonal affective disorder is relatively common in winters](#), that season was exceptionally chilly and wet, [hitting the coldest week on record](#) at the time.

Seattle's typically light rains have also become heavier because of climate change. As the atmosphere warms, it's able to hold a greater amount of water, retaining it like a sponge. When met by strong winds, that water can fall fast and hard. This doesn't mean more frequent rains throughout the year. The past 20 years have brought a tendency for drier summers, and climate models indicate the same is likely for the future, [according to the Office of the Washington State Climatologist](#). With that come prime conditions for wildfires, which have seemingly created their own season as they become more frequent, while bringing on new mental health implications for the region.

Facing environmental injustice

While the Household Pulse Survey showed a steady downward trend in reported anxiety and depression symptoms from March through July in 2021, it peaked back up in August, when heat and wildfire smoke [covered the region](#).

Megan Slade, a licensed mental health counselor who serves on the Beacon Hill Council's environmental justice task force, has observed that people tend to experience climate distress more during periods of wildfire smoke. Slade is concerned about how the impacts of climate change coincide with existing environmental issues caused by humans.

"If you're already feeling the effects of air pollution, and then heat traps air pollution, then it just kind of makes it hover with us longer. And then you have that added layer of the wildfire smoke, which adds more particulate matter, like, what does that do to us?" she said.

Of Beacon Hill's roughly 40,000 residents, 73% are people of color and 40% are immigrants, according to the neighborhood's environmental task force.

In addition to breathing unhealthy air from wildfire smoke, Beacon Hill residents also live in the [flight paths](#) of Boeing Field and the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Planes taking off from and landing at the airfields release ultrafine particles from engine exhaust, which are blown toward the neighborhood. The exposure from particulate matter can cause cardiovascular problems, respiratory issues, low birth weight, cancer and central nervous system problems. The smaller the particulates, [the deeper they can get](#) into lungs and bloodstreams.

Many families have been in the neighborhood for multiple generations and, without updates, their homes likely don't have proper insulation or they can't afford high efficiency particulate air, or HEPA, filters. Newer residents of these older homes face similar problems, according to Maritza Lauriano Ortega, environmental justice educator and organizer at El Centro de la Raza.

Ortega and Slade work with those residents as part of the ["Fix the Harm" campaign](#), which aims to generate awareness about existing and future environmental threats in the community. During their outreach, Ortega heard that many residents feel the warmer temperatures and effects of air pollution, but they don't know why it is happening. Ortega conducts educational meetings at El Centro and offers translated informational pamphlets on pollution and climate change to help older residents and parents understand the risks.

"They told me, 'Oh, yeah, this explains maybe why I've been feeling this way,' or 'why I have been really stressed out since I moved here,'" Ortega said. "And it affects their kids as well. ... They notice it at such a young age."

One of those kids told Ortega that, ever since an elementary school field trip was canceled by wildfire smoke, he has noticed he and his classmates spend more time inside.

Opening up about climate grief

Between Seattle's traditional gloomy winter weather and the so-called "smoke season," many people are spending more time indoors. For some, that means canceled plans and isolation from family and friends. In addition to a sense of loss for their own experiences, people can also feel saddened by the disappearance of a natural world they once knew.

Some clinical psychologists call these feelings "climate grief."

Seattle-based therapist Andre Bryant's clinical training had not prepared him for the ecological impacts on mental health when his clients started expressing feelings around the environment. He started researching what would become climateandmind.org, a resource where people can understand climate disruption and find help.

"When we either experience a loss or project into the future a loss, in terms of our environment, in terms of our security, in terms of what options that we or family or human beings or other species are going to have in the future, we feel sad about that, because it's something we care about being taken away," Bryant said.

When Bryant started exploring the physiological response to ecological stress and anxiety, it used to be mostly activists and scientists who could identify their source of climate distress. He also observed that groups who aren't in power, such as young people or those historically excluded from elected office, can carry a particularly heavy emotional burden. Some feel hurt because, although they will live with some of the worst effects of climate change, they aren't receiving significant help from local, state and national leadership.

Now, because of increasing awareness about climate change's mental health impacts, the public is better at identifying it, too. Bryant believes that by talking about these feelings with loved ones or a therapist, people can begin to feel less isolated.

"The wildfire smoke, the heat dome we had here last summer definitely led people to start thinking ... this is happening to us. Now we're seeing the impact. And that awareness does cause distress, anxiety," Bryant said. The more people talk about this openly, the better chance that will lead them to take some action, he added.

Through conversations about our emotions, people can then channel energy into responding to the climate crisis, whether that means taking care of their family's personal needs or joining a community movement to advocate for better policies, according to both Bryant and Wright. Such activism can directly result in resources for stronger infrastructure, trauma prevention and holistic health services.

It's why Lopez and the Duwamish River Community Coalition take people out on educational boat tours. Their conversations throughout the Duwamish Valley have resulted in various action plans for flooding mitigation and air pollution.

Lopez believes that people need to understand the historical context of environmental injustice to relate to the advocacy needed to make adjustments for a more climate resilient future.

"Share what you learn today with someone else," she told the passengers. "Part of the advocacy is to tell the story."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Experts eye subvariants BA.4, BA.5
SOURCE	https://arstechnica.com/science/2022/06/ba-4-ba-5-gain-ground-in-us-pose-higher-risk-of-breakthrough-infections/
GIST	Omicron subvariant BA.2.12.1 has overtaken BA.2 as the dominant version of the pandemic coronavirus in the US, now accounting for an estimated 59 percent of cases nationwide . But BA.2.12.1's reign may end

as quickly as it began, with yet another batch of omicron subvariants gaining ground—BA.4 and BA.5—and threatening to cause more breakthrough infections.

BA.2.12.1 has a transmission advantage over BA.2, which itself has an edge over the initial omicron subvariant, BA.1, that caused a towering surge of US cases in mid-January. BA.2 peaked in mid-April, accounting for 76 percent of US cases at its height. But [then came BA.2.12.1](#), which is named for being the 12th lineage stemming from BA.2 and the first branch of that BA.2.12 lineage.

When BA.2 peaked in mid-April, BA.2.12.1 accounted for about 18 percent of cases. It reached about 43 percent prevalence by mid-May and has since overtaken BA.2, which currently accounts for only about 35 percent of cases. BA.2.12.1 is dominant in every region of the country, except for the Northwest, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But, while BA.2.12.1 continues its rise, omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 are gaining ground. In mid-May, BA.4 and BA.5 collectively accounted for less than 2 percent of cases nationwide. But now, they're accounting for at least 6 percent, according to the latest figures from the CDC.

Heirs apparent

BA.4 and BA.5 aren't new; they were first seen causing a massive wave of infection in South Africa in mid-to-late April that peaked in mid-to-late May. BA.4 and BA.5 are often clumped together because they share the same mutations in their spike protein, though they have different mutations elsewhere in their genetic blueprints. The spike protein is the critical protein that SARS-CoV-2 uses to latch onto human cells and, as such, is the prime target of vaccine- and infection-based immune responses.

BA.4 and BA.5 have a lot of unappealing qualities that have experts wary. First, the duo has [a clear transmission advantage over BA.2.12.1](#), according to recent analyses of head-to-head comparisons of BA.4/5 to BA.2.12.1. They are poised to overcome BA.2.12.1 in the US, potentially causing yet another wave of infections.

A [recent preprint study](#) posted by researchers in Japan reported that BA.2.12.1, BA.4, and BA.5 replicate better in human lung cells than the previous reigning subvariant, BA.2. But, BA.4 and BA.5 cause more severe disease in hamsters than both BA.2 and BA.2.12.1.

The study also found that BA.4 and BA.5 can evade neutralizing antibodies generated from BA.1 and BA.2 infections. That means that people who have recovered from previous omicron infections may not have optimal protection from BA.4 and BA.5.

Additionally, [another recent preprint study](#) by researchers at Columbia University reported that BA.4 and BA.5 are better able to thwart immune responses in vaccinated and boosted people than BA.2 and BA.2.12.1. Specifically, BA.2.12.1 was 1.8-fold more resistant to the antibodies from vaccinated and boosted people than BA.2. But, BA.4 and BA.5 were collectively 4.2-fold more resistant. "Thus," the authors concluded, the rise of BA.4 and BA.5 "is likely to lead to more breakthrough infections in the coming months."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Moscow sends loyal Ukrainians to fight
SOURCE	https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-06-06/moscow-relying-on-loyal-ukrainians-for-heaviest-fighting-to-spare-russian-troops
GIST	<p>The Kremlin is relying on poorly trained, ill-equipped Ukrainian troops who support Russia to carry out some of the most deadly fighting at the center of its current campaign in an attempt to spare the lives of its own forces, British intelligence believes.</p> <p>The assessment comes as Russia steps up its campaign to encircle Ukrainian forces in the Donbas, the region of eastern Ukraine composed of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the center of Russian President</p>

Vladimir Putin's latest attempts to make up for [strategic mistakes](#) and [embarrassing losses](#) in the first three months of his invasion of the former Soviet state.

The news follows reports that Moscow had to [unearth mothballed tanks](#) to replace the hundreds that Ukraine's army had destroyed. It also comes as the U.S. and other Western allies plan to send new, advanced weaponry to Ukraine's arsenals in an attempt to break the blistering fighting in the Donbas that has devolved into what one Pentagon official last week called "[a concentrated artillery duel](#)."

The U.K. Ministry of Defense's military intelligence reported Monday that among the forces Russia has mobilized for this fighting is the Separatist Forces of the self-declared Luhansk People's Republic, a reserve force led by the Russians.

"These troops are poorly equipped and trained, and lack heavy equipment in comparison to regular Russian units," according to the assessment.

It compares their mobilization to prior Russian attempts in other conflict zones to defer battlefield casualties onto proxy forces it supports, such as with a reserve corps of Syrian army soldiers on which it relied during its campaign to prop up the regime of Bashar Assad.

"This approach likely indicates a desire to limit casualties suffered by regular Russian forces," the assessment concludes.

Russia in recent days has focused on seizing control of Severodonetsk, the strategic city in Luhansk in an attempt to encircle the Ukrainian forces fighting there. Other analysts suggest that Ukraine has succeeded in launching some limited counterattacks against Russia's forces – an indication that the potency of Moscow's troops is on the decline even as it continues "to pour equipment and troops" into the region.

"Ukrainian forces have conducted a successful counterattack in Severodonetsk in the last 48 hours and pushed Russian troops back to the eastern outskirts of the city and out of southern settlements," the Institute for the Study of War, which has tracked Russia's troop movements since its invasion on Feb. 24, wrote in an analysis it published late Sunday. "The ability of Ukrainian forces to successfully counterattack in Severodonetsk, the Kremlin's current priority area of operations, further indicates the declining combat power of Russian forces in Ukraine."

The institute had previously documented Russia's deployment of the Luhansk forces as a "major commitment of reserves to the grinding battle for the city."

"The Russian military has concentrated all of its available resources on this single battle to make only modest gains," it noted in a separate analysis on Saturday, adding that the Ukrainian military by contrast "retains the flexibility and confidence to not only conduct localized counterattacks elsewhere in Ukraine – such as north of Kherson – but conduct effective counterattacks into the teeth of Russian assaults in Severodonetsk."

Ukraine had reportedly regained 20% of the city at that time – a conspicuous shift from previous statements from Kyiv that it might have to cede the city to avoid complete encirclement by the pro-Russian forces.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle implodes after defunding police
SOURCE	https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/06/06/seattle-implodes-after-defunding-police/
GIST	Seattle's efforts to defund its police department and transfer its duties to other city agencies resulted in \$5 million worth of wrongful parking tickets and other administrative dysfunction, according to The Seattle Times.

[Seattle](#) is refunding roughly 100,000 parking tickets worth approximately \$5 million total after transferring parking enforcement duties from police to civilian parking enforcement officers in the fall of 2021, finding that the civilian officers lacked the legal authority to write the tickets, [according](#) to The Seattle Times. Parking officers also conducted more than 10,000 car tows and impounded 1,700 cars without the proper authority during this period.

“What’s going to happen here is that we’re going to get sued, I can guarantee it,” said Chuck Labertew, president of Lincoln Towing, which has the sole contract for city-initiated towing, according to The Seattle Times. “And I’m going to forward every one of those lawsuits on over to the city.”

The decision to remove this responsibility from police was part of a [push](#) in 2020 to [reduce](#) police funding and have civilians take on jobs typically handled by police, according to The Seattle Times. The City Council [cut](#) the police budget by 17% in 2020, far short of its 50% goal.

The cost of the city’s mistake may not be limited to the \$5 million in refunded tickets: People will likely contest the tows and impounds authorized by the non-police parking authority, Labertew told The Seattle Times, but the city will not refund those tows automatically.

On top of the \$5 million parking ticket debacle, efforts to defund the police have limited law enforcement’s ability to prosecute serious crimes: The Seattle Police Department is not investigating new sexual assault cases due to understaffing after more than 400 officers [left](#) the force, according to The Seattle Times.

[Crime](#) has soared in Seattle in recent years: the city saw a 95% increase in shots fired and a 171% increase in people being shot from 2021 to 2022, [according](#) to The Seattle Times. Seattle’s violent crime rate, which had been steady for 30 years, suddenly jumped 20% in 2021.

The Seattle City Council did not respond to The Daily Caller News Foundation’s request for comment.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Russia walks out of UNSC meeting
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/russia-walks-out-of-un-security-council-meeting-over-claim-it-is-using-food-as-stealth-missile
GIST	<p>European Council president Charles Michel has accused Russia of using food supplies as “a stealth missile against developing countries”, and blamed the Kremlin for the looming global food crisis, prompting Moscow’s UN ambassador to walk out of a security council meeting.</p> <p>Michel addressed Russian ambassador Vassily Nebenzia directly at a council meeting on Monday, saying he saw millions of tons of grain and wheat stuck in containers and ships at the Ukrainian port of Odesa a few weeks ago “because of Russian warships in the Black Sea”.</p> <p>He said Moscow’s attacks on Ukraine’s transport infrastructure and grain storage facilities, and its tanks, airstrikes and mines were preventing Ukraine from planting and harvesting.</p> <p>“This is driving up food prices, pushing people into poverty and destabilising entire regions,” Michel said. “Russia is solely responsible for this looming food crisis. Russia alone.”</p> <p>Michel accused Russian forces of stealing grain from areas in Ukraine that it has occupied “while shifting the blame of others,” calling this “cowardly” and “propaganda, pure and simple”.</p> <p>Nebenzia walked out, giving Russia’s seat to another diplomat. Russia’s deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyansky said later on Telegram’s Russian channel that Michel’s comments were “so rude” that the Russian ambassador left the security council chamber.</p>

	<p>Nebenzia later told Reuters: “I couldn’t stay”, claiming it was because of “the lies that Charles Michel came here to distribute”.</p> <p>Amid a worsening global food crisis, US secretary of state Antony Blinken said there were “credible reports” that Russia was “pilfering” Ukraine’s grain exports to sell for profit. Blinken said the alleged theft was part of broader Russian actions during its war in Ukraine that have hit Ukraine’s ability to export its wheat crop.</p> <p>Prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertiliser have soared since the invasion, which began on 24 February. Russia and Ukraine account for nearly a third of global wheat supplies, while Russia is also a fertiliser exporter and Ukraine is an exporter of corn and sunflower oil.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 How to get 20M tons of grain out Ukraine?
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/how-do-you-get-20m-tonnes-of-grain-out-of-ukraine
GIST	<p>A clock is ticking inside the towering, multistorey warehouses on the quayside at the Black Sea port of Odesa on the Ukrainian coast.</p> <p>One huge metal structure alone contains a quarter of a million tonnes of grain, yet represents just over 1% of the estimated 20m tonnes trapped in Ukraine since the Russian invasion began in late February.</p> <p>Hundreds more of these “grain elevators” are scattered across the world’s fifth-biggest wheat exporting country: next to roads, at railway terminals, and at ports. Yet still full of last year’s harvest, these towers are already almost at capacity.</p> <p>In just over a month the spring harvest gets under way, when farmers begin collecting the winter wheat, which will need to find its way to Ukraine’s grain silos. Meanwhile, inflation is soaring, countries such as India are blocking wheat exports, and the risk of famine is growing.</p> <p>Pressure is building for an international agreement on a rescue mission for Ukraine’s grain, which is desperately needed to feed the world, and which Kyiv urgently wants to sell to get its hands on vital foreign currency. Ukraine produces as much as half the world’s sunflower seeds, a tenth of its wheat and up to a fifth of barley and rapeseed.</p> <p>As well as a huge diplomatic effort, rescuing Ukraine’s grain also represents a vexing logistical challenge. Given the vast quantities involved, the majority of Ukrainian grain has always been transported by sea rather than road or rail.</p> <p>Turkey – which has the authority over sea traffic entering and leaving the Black Sea – is thought to be leading conversations with Russia about proposals to allow grain ships from Ukraine through a naval corridor to the Bosphorus.</p> <p>However, several problems need to be solved to ensure the safe transport of Ukrainian crops, beyond international agreements, from ship and crew capacity to the availability of insurance.</p> <p>When Russia launched its full invasion of Ukraine, it blockaded the country’s Black Sea ports including Odesa, preventing any ships from leaving or entering harbours. In addition, the surrounding waters have been filled with floating mines. De-mining the waters would be required for any kind of grain corridor.</p> <p>Then there is the challenge of finding the armada of vessels to transport the grain. Agricultural goods are moved between continents in bulk cargo vessels, which can hold as much as 50,000 tonnes, poured into several large compartments in the ship’s hold.</p> <p>If an estimated 20m tonnes of grain were to be transported, as many as 400 suitable ships would be required.</p>

However, shipping analysts say vessel availability should not be a limiting factor, although it would require some time for these bulk carriers to reroute and sail to the Black Sea from their current locations.

“Before the war, more than 90% of all Ukrainian agri-food export was done by sea,” said Mariia Didukh, director of the Ukrainian National Agrarian Forum, which represents the country’s largest food producing organisations.

Export figures underline the scale of the challenge: before the war, between 5m and 6m tonnes of grain were exported each month from Ukraine’s seaports, according to the International Grains Council, an intergovernmental organisation that seeks to promote cooperation in the global grain trade.

According to Didukh, only a fifth of normal monthly export levels has been transported out of the country by alternate means during the first three months of the war, representing just 1.2m tonnes of grains, sunflower oil and all other agricultural exports.

“We have been developing alternative routes for export including railway, trucks, and some Danube ports in Romania,” she said. “By railway or trucks it is more expensive, it is longer and very, very small capacities. It is unreal for us.”

Rail and road are also fraught with logistical challenges. The Ukrainian railway network has, like Russia, a slightly wider gauge, or distance between the two rails of a railway track, than its European neighbours such as Poland or Romania.

This means grain transported by rail has to be unloaded and put on a different train when it reaches Ukraine’s European borders.

The Guardian understands that three Ukrainian ports are being considered for departures of grain ships: not only Odesa but also the neighbouring ports of Yuzhne to the west, and Chornomorsk to the east.

A shipping company source working in Ukraine said much needs to be done to ensure the safety of any transport, once the sea close to the coast has been swept for mines, including the provision of adequate insurance to cover the vessel and the crew.

According to the source, even Russian government assurances to ships using the naval corridor might not persuade all shipowners to undertake a mission.

“There is a lot of money to be made and some companies are more relaxed about taking on more risk,” the source said.

The availability of war insurance, to cover both ship and crew, will also be a determining factor in the success of any grain corridor.

The influential London-based Joint War Committee designated Russian and Ukrainian waters in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov as “listed areas” in February, meaning that shipowners are required to notify insurance underwriters if they are travelling there. This also means that additional premiums are charged.

Even if suitable “war insurance” could be arranged, some shipping industry representatives are not convinced a grain corridor can be arranged quickly.

“I think it is an unlikely prospect for the time being. You have got to be sure that your ship is not going to be targeted,” said Guy Platten, the secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping.

“So many things would have to put in place before any shipowner is going to take the charter, and would need so many assurances before ships would move up there.”

Return to Top	<p>He added that about 100 ships, and 2,000 crew with 20 different nationalities were “in the wrong place at the wrong time” when Russia invaded, and have been stuck in Ukraine’s ports ever since. It has taken time but now more than three-quarters of these seafarers have been evacuated to safety, although about 450 remain onboard.</p> <p>“There are lots of steps that would have to happen before ships were to trade there again, and there are going to be huge premiums in place,” Platten said. “Every shipowner will look at the risk and the reward.”</p> <p>While international talks continue, the clock is ticking. Ukraine’s agriculture industry and food analysts estimate the world has 10 weeks to find a solution, before the spring harvest will need to take its place in the country’s grain silos.</p> <p>Discussions about time pressure are likely to dominate at the annual meeting of the International Grains Council, which counts Russia and Ukraine as members, when it meets in London on Tuesday.</p> <p>A failure to arrange a grain corridor could also have lasting repercussions for countries such as Egypt, who are reliant on Ukrainian imports.</p> <p>“The question will be for harvest ‘23,” said Arnaud Petit, the executive director of the International Grains Council.</p> <p>“If Ukrainian farmers see that the capacity of export from Ukraine is very limited, they will limit production for harvest ‘23, and that would mean that would mean we are looking at not only one year but two years of market disruptions, that would be the worst-case scenario.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Climate delegates snub Russia address
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/06/energy-prices-ukraine-war-climate-summit-bonn
GIST	<p>Delegates have walked out of a session at a climate summit in Bonn on Monday as a Russian official made a speech, in a sign of the geopolitical tensions overshadowing the negotiations.</p> <p>The low-key protest marked the first intervention by Russia in a UN climate forum since the invasion of Ukraine, but it did not stop the talks.</p> <p>Climate diplomats and experts said governments must not use geopolitical tensions and soaring energy prices as an excuse for falling behind on their climate commitments.</p> <p>These are the first UN climate negotiations since Russia invaded Ukraine, and the first since the Cop26 summit in Glasgow in November ended with countries pledging to reconvene this year with strengthened commitments on cutting greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Patricia Espinosa, the UN’s climate chief, warned: “Climate change is not an agenda we can afford to push back on our global schedule. We need decisions and actions now, and it is incumbent on all nations to make progress in Bonn.”</p> <p>With less than six months to go before Cop27 in Egypt this November, few countries are yet planning to update their plans on emissions cuts – known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs) – in line with the goal of limiting global temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, as they agreed to do in Glasgow.</p> <p>Artur Runge-Metzger, a former EU chief negotiator, now a fellow of the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change in Berlin, told the Guardian: “Countries will use Bonn to show where they stand, what their priorities are ahead of Cop27, and they must address the ambition gap [between the pledges made at Cop26 and those needed to hold to 1.5C].</p>

“Everyone knows that coming out of Glasgow, the 1.5C goal was not 100% accomplished – it was a big step forward, but there is still a gap remaining.”

If fulfilled, the pledges on emissions cuts would result in a [temperature rise of less than 2C](#), the [first time](#) this milestone has been reached. However, that is still a [long way adrift of the 1.5C threshold](#) countries have agreed to target. Analysts said tougher pledges were urgently needed.

Bill Hare, the chief executive of Climate Analytics, warned: “The world appears to be [sleepwalking to disaster](#). Governments appear to think taking more action is too hard. What will be more difficult is dealing with a 3C world. Already this year, we’ve seen horrific impacts, like the heatwave in India and Pakistan, and floods in the same region. This is just the beginning.”

Many countries have scope to take more action, particularly as soaring energy prices have [forced them to reconsider their energy security](#). Niklas Höhne, of the NewClimate Institute, said: “The EU could take the lead as it is already set to overachieve its renewables targets. It would be good to see at least one big emitter step up and ... bring others along.”

On current policies and measures, the world would reach [at least 2.7C and potentially 3.6C](#). The three living former UN climate heads [made a rare joint statement in the Guardian last week](#), pointing out this “implementation gap” and criticising countries for failing to translate their promises into policy.

Espinosa also called for action in Bonn. “Cop27 in Egypt needs to focus on implementation. Nations must show how they will, through legislation, policies and programmes, and throughout all jurisdictions and sectors, begin putting [the \[2015\] Paris agreement](#) to work in their home countries,” she said.

The fortnight-long Bonn talks are unlikely to produce any breakthrough or firm resolutions but are an opportunity for countries to iron out details left over at Glasgow and set out plans on their [key priorities for Cop27 in Sharm el-Sheikh](#).

Observers will be watching keenly to judge the atmosphere at the talks, and whether countries are willing to cooperate, despite the worsening geopolitical tensions around the Ukraine war, economic and social instability as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and [high energy and food prices](#).

At Glasgow, negotiators finally put the seal on the Paris rulebook, the set of instructions and accords needed to put the 2015 agreement into operation. Those complex technical issues, which also involved difficult political conundrums such as whether to allow countries to [use carbon trading to meet their emissions goals](#), have occupied thousands of hours of negotiating time. Now, countries should, in theory at least, have cleared much more space at Bonn and in Egypt for negotiators to grapple with the substantive issues, such as emissions cuts.

However, [thorny problems](#) remain, including the [protection of the world’s forests](#), the means of providing finance for poor countries to adapt to the impacts of climate breakdown, and the vexed question of [loss and damage](#), which refers to the types of catastrophic damage that cannot be adapted to, and for which poor countries will need particular help.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Polio outbreak in Pakistan worsens
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jun/07/polio-outbreak-in-pakistan-worsens-as-eighth-child-reported-paralysed
GIST	<p>Pakistan’s polio eradication campaign is in disarray after an alarming jump in cases last week. Eight polio cases have now been reported in children over the past month in North Waziristan district, bordering Afghanistan. They are the first cases in more than a year.</p> <p>This new outbreak, officials believe, is due to parents falsely marking themselves and their children as vaccinated, and the government has launched an investigation into the outbreak.</p>

North Waziristan is a former Taliban stronghold in north-west [Pakistan](#), where high vaccine refusal rates are thought to be behind the new cases.

“Fake markings and refusals are two key reasons in the recent outbreak, with polio staff conspiring with parents to miss the vaccination,” said an official at Pakistan’s polio eradication programme, referring to how [parents suspicious of immunisation have got hold of special pens](#) used by health workers to mark vaccinated children’s fingers.

Dr Shahzad Baig, national programme coordinator, said: “The cases are highlighting exactly where the challenges lie, and we are doing our utmost to ensure that the virus remains contained and we fight it till the end.”

Before this surge, the last case of child paralysis as a result of polio was reported in January last year.

The federal health minister, Abdul Qadir Patel, said: “Following the first two cases in April, the polio programme took immediate steps to ringfence this area and prevent the virus from spreading further, particularly in the historic reservoirs [of infection] of Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta.

“Pakistan has had tremendous [success against polio](#) over the past few years, and we are taking all steps to protect the gains made by the programme.”

It was crucial for parents to vaccinate their children every time it was due, said the minister, as every dose of polio vaccine built further immunity.

Nationwide vaccination drives have been carried out door-to-door for the past 25 years. The teams are mostly [female health workers, often volunteers](#), who have to be escorted by security guards.

Three such campaigns have been carried out in January, March and May this year. During the March campaign in north-western Pakistan, [gunmen shot and killed a female polio worker](#). In January, also in the north-west, assailants shot and killed a police officer providing security to the polio team.

Militant groups in Pakistan have killed more than 100 health workers and their security guards since 2012.

According to the World [Health](#) Organization, Pakistan is one of only two countries, with Afghanistan, where the wild polio virus is still endemic.

Anti-vaccination sentiment in Pakistan is deeply rooted. Clerics and others have spread myths that vaccines are a conspiracy by the west to sterilise Muslim children, and a husband was [allowed to divorce his wife](#) for vaccinating their children against polio.

In April 2019, more than 25,000 children were rushed to hospital during a mass panic in north-west Pakistan after the spread of [unfounded rumours about polio vaccines causing fainting and vomiting](#).

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HEADLINE	06/06 Chernobyl workers pick up the pieces
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/chernobyl-workers-pick-up-the-pieces-after-russian-occupation-11654507800?mod=hp_lead_pos7
GIST	<p>CHERNOBYL, Ukraine—When Aleksandr Barsukov and his colleagues returned to work at the Chernobyl nuclear plant after the retreat of Moscow’s forces, they found in every office what they described as a parting gift from the Russian soldiers: a pile of human excrement.</p> <p>For weeks, Russian forces occupied the plant, prompting many observers to fear that fighting could lead to yet another disaster in this small town some 20 miles from Ukraine’s northern border with Belarus.</p>

Television monitors were ripped off walls, doors were broken and equipment was destroyed. Tank tracks can be seen across the Chernobyl exclusion zone, as well as discarded green lunchboxes, which officials say belonged to the Russian soldiers and are now likely radioactive.

“The poop was the icing on the cake,” joked Mr. Barsukov, the deputy director of the Chernobyl Ecocenter, which keeps samples of radioactive material collected from all over the world.

Employees at the plant, site of the worst nuclear-reactor disaster in history, are now working to recover—and clean up—from the weeks of [Russian occupation](#), which they say left the place in shambles. And while it could have been worse, the experience points to the acute dangers nuclear plants in war zones face.

“When the invasion started, the front guards got a call to fall back because a huge flow of Russian troops were coming,” said Julia Bezdizha, a spokeswoman for the plant. “They fled mainly because it was very dangerous to stay and engage in heavy combat because of the heavy radiation.”

Valentina Borisovna, 83 years old, a sewing-factory employee who lives in the local village, said Russian troops showed up at her door in early March on the hunt for members of Right Sector, a far-right Ukrainian nationalist organization. They didn’t find any, she said, but they took food and some household valuables.

“They told me they went to one house and found a bunch of Right Sector materials, swastikas, and other paraphernalia, but it was probably an excuse to steal things,” Ms. Borisovna said.

Throughout the ordeal, the plant itself remained functional, thanks to a handful of workers who remained on site even after Russian tanks rolled into the facility from Belarus on Feb. 24. The plant was initially disconnected from Ukraine’s power grid, sparking fear that it could disrupt the cooling of on-site nuclear material and potentially lead to radiation leaks.

After five days of using a backup generator for its electricity, Ukrainian engineers restored the main power, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

Rafael Grossi, the head of the IAEA, said in April that the occupation of Chernobyl was “very, very dangerous,” adding that there were “some moments when the [radiation] levels have gone up because of the movement of the heavy equipment that Russian forces were bringing here and when they left.”

At first, a Russian military official brought in employees from Rosatom, Russia’s state nuclear agency, and suggested that they oversee management of the nuclear facility.

“They didn’t know how,” Ms. Bezdizha said. “It requires special skills that they didn’t have.”

About 300 Ukrainian workers, ranging from engineers to guards, had been trapped at the facility when the invasion began. Many of them, working around the clock with no breaks, [kept the plant operating](#), even as heavy fighting took place in towns nearby.

Weeks later, when Russian positions around Kyiv started to crumble and troops fell back, occupying forces at Chernobyl left. Ukrainian officials still worry, however, about [Europe’s largest nuclear-power station](#), in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, which has been the scene of heavy artillery fire since early March.

Ukrainian authorities said about 500 Russian soldiers have settled on the site of the Zaporizhzhia plant with tanks, weapons and explosives—an arsenal that violates basic security protocols for a nuclear facility.

Chernobyl at least avoided the worst-case scenario, but the aftermath of the Russian occupation is still affecting those at the plant.

The Ukrainian military had to lay a temporary crossing to replace a bridge that retreating Russian forces destroyed, and many workers now face a long commute.

Before the war, many plant workers traveled from the Ukrainian city of Chernihiv to Chernobyl by cutting through Belarus. But that border is now closed since Belarus facilitated a staging ground for Russian troops to invade Ukraine.

“Now they have to do a huge circle and commute through Kyiv,” Ms. Bezdizha said. “Instead of a 30- to 40-minute drive they have a two- to 2½-hour drive.”

Across the plant grounds remains evidence that the Russian soldiers were poorly informed about the nature of their terrain. Military trenches were dug into the ground, stirring up soil still contaminated from the 1986 accident.

“They’re idiots,” said Mr. Barsukov, with a laugh. “Who digs ditches on the radioactive land? They didn’t know what they were doing!”

Employees are working toward some semblance of normalcy, even as war continues elsewhere in the country, and cleanup has begun in and around the plant.

Mr. Barsukov said the workers have returned to ruined offices. Conference rooms were spray-painted, files were strewn across all the offices and computer screens were smashed in.

“Hard drives were taken out of all computers in all buildings,” he said, adding that the Russians also left behind 100 liters of high-quality vodka.

“It could have been a lot worse,” he said.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Zelensky visits eastern front
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/zelensky-visits-eastern-front-as-ukraine-tries-to-beat-back-russian-advance-11654506701
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the front lines of the fighting in the eastern Luhansk region on Sunday, miles from where a Russian general was killed, highlighting the shifting military situation in the area.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky greeted troops in Lysychansk, one of the last cities in Luhansk that Ukrainians fully control and just across the river from Severodonetsk, the center of the fight for control of the Donbas area, which includes Luhansk.</p> <p>It is the closest Ukraine’s president has come to the fighting since Russian forces pulled out of the Kyiv area in central Ukraine in March. Moscow has been focusing its firepower in Donbas recently.</p> <p>Fighting in the streets of Severodonetsk, the capital of the Ukrainian-administered Luhansk region, is continuing and Ukrainian forces have pulled back from the center of the city after launching counterattacks that pushed back Russian forces over the weekend. Ukrainian forces control the city’s industrial zone and some nearby areas, according to Serhiy Haidai, the governor of the Luhansk region.</p> <p>“Our heroes hold their positions in Severodonetsk. Fierce street fights continue in the city,” Mr. Zelensky said in his nightly address Monday.</p> <p>Moscow has spent more than a week trying to capture Severodonetsk, pausing offensives in other parts of the country and pouring troops and equipment into the city. Yet its superior artillery power has been of limited use in the close, urban combat.</p>

The general killed Sunday, Russian Army Maj. Gen. Roman Kutuzov, was less than 30 miles from Lysychansk when he died, as his forces tried to sever the road between Severodonetsk and the town of Bakhmut, according to Russian media. Ukrainian officials posted photographs of what they claimed were Gen. Kutuzov's remains, suggesting that his body is in Ukrainian custody.

Mr. Zelensky also visited Soledar, in the Donbas region, and Zaporizhzhia, where he met families who had fled Mariupol, a port city in the Donetsk region that Russia took control of last month. "We brought something to the military," he said in a video address early Monday morning. "We brought confidence."

For now, Moscow retains an advantage in firepower, which it has used to strike other parts of Ukraine.

Over the weekend, Russia fired missiles into the area of Kyiv, the capital, and Mykolaiv, in southern Ukraine. On Sunday night, Russians repeatedly shelled the Kharkiv region in the north. Oleh Synyehubov, governor of the Kharkiv region, said on Telegram Sunday night that a handful of villages in the region had been hit by Russian shells.

Fighting in the region was heaviest around Izyum, Mr. Synyehubov said. But Russian forces have been unable to make gains in the area, according to the Institute for the Study of War, because they have continued to give priority to taking Severodonetsk.

"Ukrainian counteroffensive pressure will likely continue to draw the attention of Russian forces to Luhansk Oblast and therefore leave vulnerabilities in Russian defensive efforts in Kharkiv Oblast and along the Southern Axis," the institute said Sunday.

While Mr. Zelensky was visiting Donbas, the flow of military equipment from the West has continued to accelerate. On Monday morning, the U.K. promised to send long-range missiles to Kyiv for the first time; the U.S. said last week it would send a guided-rocket system capable of striking targets as far as 48 miles away. Spain is preparing to send Leopard tanks, according to Spanish media. Germany has been negotiating with Greece to transfer armored vehicles to Kyiv. Ukrainian leaders hope the increased firepower will help them push the Russians back.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Sunday on state television that deliveries of Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, or MLRS, wouldn't change anything, calling it an effort by the West to make up for military equipment that Ukraine had already lost. He did, however, indicate it might prompt Russia to escalate its attacks.

"If they are supplied, we will draw appropriate conclusions from this and use our own weapons, of which we have enough, to hit targets that we have not yet struck," Mr. Putin said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called off a planned trip to Serbia on Monday. Officials in Moscow said the change occurred because three members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bulgaria—refused to allow Mr. Lavrov's plane to fly through their airspace.

"If the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Serbia is perceived as almost a global threat, then things in the West are very bad," Mr. Lavrov said. Russia and Serbia have warm relations.

Bulgaria is a member of the European Union, which said in late February that it would bar Russian planes from entering its airspace. North Macedonia and Montenegro joined the EU sanctions against Russia. NATO didn't immediately comment.

U.S. authorities, meanwhile, have filed documents to seize two planes owned by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, saying that the planes were manufactured in the U.S. and are subject to U.S. sanctions imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The documents were unsealed Monday.

HEADLINE	06/06 US moves to seize oligarch's planes
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-moves-to-seize-two-planes-owned-by-russian-oligarch-roman-abramovich-11654533425
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—U. S. authorities filed a warrant to seize two planes owned by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, saying that as U.S.-manufactured aircraft, they are subject to U.S. sanctions imposed in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>According to a court document filed Monday, a Boeing Co. 787 Dreamliner and Gulfstream jet owned by Mr. Abramovich flew into Russia after February, a trip that would have required a U.S. export license. One jet is in Dubai and the other in Moscow, according to the warrant.</p> <p>“Those vessels are not today taken into U.S. custody, but they are now publicly known as wanted property, as tainted assets subject to forfeiture and under active pursuit,” a Justice Department official said. A representative for Mr. Abramovich couldn’t immediately be reached for comment.</p> <p>The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this year that Mr. Abramovich, the world’s best-known Russian oligarch, flew his Dreamliner, worth hundreds of millions of dollars into Dubai on March 4, its last known location. The plane is designed for 250 passengers.</p> <p>Known for his relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his efforts to serve as a go-between between the Kremlin and Ukrainian leadership, Mr. Abramovich faces U.K. and European Union restrictions but hasn’t been subject to U.S. measures on account of his role in the talks. While he engaged as a mediator in the talks, the Journal reported in April, he also reshuffled his holdings to shield assets from sanctions, including by shifting control of an investment vehicle associated with him, moving two megayachts and trying to sell some U.S. hedge-fund assets.</p> <p>Mr. Abramovich has continued to help with evacuations and prisoner swaps, but the peace talks have stalled, according to people familiar with the matter.</p> <p>As part of a broad sanctions package in February, the U.S. and its allies imposed sweeping measures against Russia after Moscow launched what President Biden called “an unprovoked and unjustified attack” on Ukraine, hoping a fresh tranche of penalties would punish Russia and persuade it to ratchet down hostilities.</p> <p>Those sanctions imposed limits on the export of aircraft and aircraft parts to Russia without a license, and further limited exceptions for Russian nationals.</p> <p>The warrant said investigators had examined records related to the planes from Aruba, the British Virgin Islands and Jersey in their probe. The Journal reported last month that authorities in the latter offshore financial center in the English Channel are conducting a wide-ranging preliminary probe into Mr. Abramovich’s wealth held on the island, including whether a business partner helped the billionaire try to evade U.K. sanctions, citing people familiar with the situation.</p> <p>The Gulfstream flew from Istanbul to Moscow on March 12, and again flew into Moscow on March 15, where the warrant said it had remained since. According to the document, a Jersey company controlled by Mr. Abramovich, Clear Skies Flights Ltd., bought the plane in March 2020 for \$60 million.</p> <p>Another company Mr. Abramovich allegedly controlled, a British Virgin Islands firm called Wenham Overseas Ltd., bought the jet for \$93.6 million in December 2017 and customized the interior to make it worth around \$350 million, the warrant said. In connection with that deal, Mr. Abramovich’s representatives disclosed that Mr. Abramovich was the ultimate beneficial owner of Wenham, the warrant said.</p> <p>He controlled both companies through a series of shell companies, prosecutors said.</p>

	<p>The Commerce Department earlier this year publicly flagged both planes as potential violators of U.S. sanctions. Also on Monday, the agency released a letter it sent to Mr. Abramovich telling him he committed three violations of export regulations by flying the planes into Russia, which could subject him to civil penalties.</p> <p>The letter said that Mr. Abramovich took actions in February to reorganize the ownership of his assets, including making his children, who are Russian citizens, the beneficiaries of the companies that own the planes.</p> <p>Earlier this year, the Justice Department formed a task force known as KleptoCapture to track and try to seize assets of Russian elites as part of an international effort to raise the cost to the Kremlin and its supporters of pursuing the Ukraine invasion.</p> <p>In April, authorities seized a \$90 million super yacht in Spain that was owned by Viktor Vekselberg, a sanctioned oligarch with close ties to Mr. Putin. The yacht is now going through the forfeiture process in court.</p> <p>In May, law-enforcement officials in Fiji seized a \$325 million superyacht owned by another Russian oligarch who was previously sanctioned for alleged money laundering.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Saudi Arabia steps closer to Israel
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-moves-toward-eventual-ties-with-israel-11654517783?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1
GIST	<p>Saudi Arabia is engaging in serious talks with Israel to build business ties and create new security arrangements as the conservative Islamic kingdom senses a shift among its public in favor of establishing official ties with the majority Jewish state.</p> <p>Although Saudi Arabia doesn't recognize Israel and has no diplomatic relations with its neighbor, the kingdom is expanding its secretive talks with Israeli leaders that could reshape Middle East politics and end decades of enmity between two of the region's most influential nations.</p> <p>With the Biden administration's help, Saudi Arabia and Israel are trying to broker an agreement that could give commercial planes expanded rights to fly from Israel over the kingdom and pave the way for Saudi Arabia to take full control of two strategic Red Sea islands, according to people familiar with the efforts.</p> <p>At the same time, Riyadh has allowed a series of Israeli businessmen to travel to Saudi Arabia as the two nations look to deepen their economic ties, according to people familiar with the visits.</p> <p>The Saudi government is making the moves as it sees support growing among its public for ties with Israel. On a recent visit to Washington, Saudi Prince Khalid bin Salman, the son of Saudi King Salman and brother of the kingdom's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, privately told people that recent polling showed a decisive shift, especially among Saudis under 30 years old, in favor of diplomatic relations with Israel, according to people briefed on the talks.</p> <p>While official diplomatic relations may still be years away, the series of secret political, military and economic steps could accelerate long-building efforts to end the conflict between two countries that see a shared threat in Iran, according to people involved in the efforts.</p> <p>The Saudi-Israeli talks are a key element in efforts to repair strained ties between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, as the Biden administration begins to embrace former President Donald Trump's push to build ties between Israel and the Arab world without waiting for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.</p> <p>The White House is trying to arrange a visit by President Biden to Israel and Saudi Arabia in the coming weeks for a decisive trip that could advance the political interests of all three countries.</p>

Although Israel and Saudi Arabia have been official enemies since the Jewish majority nation was created in 1948, the two countries' unofficial ties stretch back decades and have accelerated since 2020, when the Trump administration brokered a series of deals [known as the Abraham Accords](#) to establish relations between Israel and Arab countries.

Israeli officials have flown to the kingdom for secret meetings over the years, including then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who went to Saudi Arabia to meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in 2020 in an effort to advance diplomatic talks.

Mr. Netanyahu's visit was the highest profile visit by an Israeli leader to Saudi Arabia, but it wasn't the first.

Yossi Cohen, who served as head of Israel's intelligence service when the country was brokering the normalization deals, secretly traveled several times to Saudi Arabia, where he met Prince Mohammed and visited the home of Prince Khalid, who serves as deputy defense minister, according to people familiar with the efforts.

The question is no longer if Saudi Arabia will accept Israel as a neighbor, but when, Israeli and Saudi officials say.

"We believe that it is possible to have a normalization process with Saudi Arabia," Israel Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said last week. "It's in our interest."

In a recent interview, Prince Mohammed said he supported working with Israel—a position that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

"We don't look at Israel as an enemy, we look to them as a potential ally, with many interests that we can pursue together," the Saudi crown prince told the Atlantic magazine. "But we have to solve some issues before we get to that."

Among those issues is a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Saudi Arabia still officially supports the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, often called the two-state solution. There haven't been serious peace talks for almost a decade, and Israel has made moves in recent years that have dimmed hopes for a Palestinian state.

"We always envisioned that there will be full normalization with Israel. A full normalization between us and Israel, between the region and Israel, will bring immense benefits," Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, the Saudi foreign minister, said recently at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "We won't be able to reap those benefits unless we address the issue of Palestine."

Still, Saudi and Israeli officials said they could take incremental steps toward normalization before the overall conflict is resolved, as support for the Palestinians doesn't resonate with younger people across the Middle East in the way it once did.

Saudi officials say they are disillusioned with the Palestinian Authority, run by President Mahmoud Abbas. And Saudis resent Iran's support for Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that controls the Gaza Strip.

"If Hamas builds a relationship with Iran to protect themselves, then why don't we have a relationship with Israel against Iran to protect ourselves?" said one Saudi official.

Warming Saudi-Israeli ties could help President Biden shore up frayed relations between Washington and Riyadh. He took office in 2021 with a vow to treat Saudi Arabia as a "pariah" because of its unpopular war in Yemen and a U.S. intelligence assessment that Prince Mohammed ordered a Saudi team in 2018 to abduct or kill Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi critic and Washington Post columnist.

The prospect of Mr. Biden meeting Prince Mohammed has drawn sharp criticism from lawmakers in Washington and human rights groups who want the president to take stronger steps to champion human rights in Saudi Arabia. The U.S. is looking to address criticism that it is letting Saudi leaders off the hook by pressing Riyadh to move toward a new relationship with Israel.

“Israel wants to normalize with Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia wants to normalize with the Biden administration,” said David Makovsky, a distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

A Saudi move to establish diplomatic ties with Israel would effectively give most other Arab and Muslim nations a green light to follow suit. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and oversees its two holiest sites in Mecca and Medina.

U.S. officials have warned Saudi Arabia that it risks losing out on economic and security deals to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, countries that are quickly moving to capitalize on their new ties with Israel.

The most likely next step, Israeli and Saudi officials say, could be expanded rights for planes to fly from Israel over Saudi Arabia as part of broader talks about security on two strategic Red Sea islands—negotiations earlier reported on by Axios.

Along with the political and military rapprochement, Saudi Arabia has cleared the way for some Israelis—once barred from entering the kingdom—to fly to Riyadh in recent months for a series of meetings meant to deepen business ties between the two countries, according to people involved in the efforts. Saudi Arabia’s major sovereign-wealth fund has already given former Trump administration official Jared Kushner the green light to invest some of its money in Israeli companies for the first time.

The U.S. is also trying to secure a deal that would allow Saudi Arabia to take full security control of two Red Sea islands—Tiran and Sanafir—that require approval from Israel.

The islands, which sit in a strategic location between the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea, have been at the center of a regional tug of war for decades between Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and currently host an international force that provides security.

The three countries are now looking at a proposal to move the multinational force off the islands and allow Saudi Arabia to control security in both places, according to people involved in the talks. The deal is seen as another way for Israel and Saudi Arabia to show they are improving ties.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Potential dark side to hot labor market?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/business/economy/the-potential-dark-side-of-a-white-hot-labor-market.html
GIST	<p>Shanna Jackson, the president of Nashville State Community College, is struggling with a dilemma that reads like good news: Her students are taking jobs from employers who are eager to hire, and paying them good wages.</p> <p>The problem is that students often drop their plans to earn a degree in order to take the attractive positions offered by these desperate employers. Ms. Jackson is worried that when the labor market cools — a near certainty as the Federal Reserve Board raises interest rates, slowing the economy in an attempt to control rapid inflation — an incomplete education will come back to haunt these students.</p> <p>“If you’ve got housing costs rising, gas prices going up, food prices going up, the short-term decision is: Let me make money now, and I’ll go back to school later,” Ms. Jackson said. Anecdotally, she said, the</p>

issue is most intense in hospitality-related training programs, where credentials are often valued but not technically required.

Strong labor markets often encourage people to forgo training, but this economic moment poses unusually difficult trade-offs for students with families or other financial responsibilities. Cutting working hours to go to class right now means passing up the benefits of strong wage growth at a moment of soaring fuel, food and housing costs.

Taking advantage of the plentiful job opportunities available now could come with upsides — employment can build résumés and provide people with valuable experience and skills. But labor economists say that deciding to skip school and training today could come at a cost down the road. Research [consistently suggests](#) that people with degrees and skills training earn more and have more job stability in the longer run.

“It’s really great to have income, but you also want to keep your eye on the future,” Mary C. Daly, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, said in an interview last week. “Workers with higher skills will have higher wages and more upside potential.”

Ms. Daly speaks from personal experience. She herself [dropped out of high school](#) at age 15 to earn money. She eventually earned her graduation equivalency and enrolled in a semester of classes at a local college, but had to work three part-time jobs — at a Target, a doughnut shop and a deli — to support herself while she studied. She went on to pursue a degree full time and later earned a Ph.D. in economics.

“That hard work was the best choice I have ever made,” she said. Drawing on her own experience and on the data she parses as a labor economist, she often urges young people to stay in training to improve their own future opportunities, even if they have to balance it with work.

“The jobs that are hot right now — restaurants, warehousing — these are things that won’t last forever,” Ms. Daly said.

Many sectors are, unquestionably, booming. Today’s labor market has 1.9 open jobs for every available worker and the fastest wage growth for [rank-and-file workers](#) since the early 1980s. That’s especially true for [lower-wage occupations](#) in fields such as leisure and hospitality.

Against that backdrop, fewer students are opting to continue their education. The [latest enrollment figures](#), released in May by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, showed that 662,000 [fewer students](#) enrolled in undergraduate programs this spring than had a year earlier, a decline of 4.7 percent.

Community college enrollment is also way down, having fallen by 827,000 students since the start of the pandemic. The decline is likely partly demographic, and partly a result of choices made during the pandemic.

The shift to online learning was challenging for many students, and, just as schools were allowing students back into the classroom, the job market heated up and opportunities suddenly abounded. Inflation began to ratchet up at the same time, making earning money more critical as the cost of rent, gas and food climbed. That confluence of factors is likely keeping many students from continuing to pursue their education.

Gabby Calvo, 18, left the business administration program at Nashville State this year. She said she did not know what she wanted to do with the degree, and had begun making good money, \$21 an hour, as a front-end manager at a Kroger grocery store. The job was an unusual one for someone her age to land.

“They didn’t really have anyone, so they took a chance on me,” she said, explaining that nobody else stood ready to fill the position and she had worked closely with the person who held it previously.

Teenagers [are often finding](#) they can land positions they might not have otherwise as companies stretch to find talent, and teenage unemployment is now hovering [near the lowest level](#) since the 1950s.

Ms. Calvo is hoping to work her way up to the assistant store-manager level, which would put her in a salaried position, and thinks she has made the prudent choice in leaving school, even if her parents disagree.

“They think it’s a bad idea — they think I should have quit working, gone to college,” she said. But she has made enough money to put her name on a lease, which she recently signed along with her boyfriend, who is 19 and works at the restaurant in a local Nordstrom.

“I feel like I have a lot of experience, and I have a lot more to gain,” Ms. Calvo said.

The question, then, is how people like Ms. Calvo will fare in a weaker labor market, because today’s remarkable economic strength is unlikely to continue.

The Fed is raising rates in a bid to slow down consumer demand, which would in turn cool down job and wage growth. Monetary policy is a blunt instrument: There is a risk that the central bank will end up pushing unemployment higher, and even touch off a recession, as it tries to bring today’s rapid inflation under control.

That could be bad news for people without credentials or degrees. Historically, workers with less education and those who have been hired more recently are the ones to lose their jobs when unemployment rises and the economy weakens. At the onset of the pandemic, to consider an extreme example, unemployment for adults with a high school education [jumped to 17.6 percent](#), while that for the college educated peaked at [8.4 percent](#).

The same people benefiting from unusual opportunities and rapid pay gains today could be the ones to suffer in a downturn. That is one reason economists and educators like Ms. Jackson often urge people to continue their training.

“We worry about their long-term futures, if this derails them from ever going to college, for a \$17 to \$19 Target job. That’s a loss,” said Alicia Sasser Modestino, an associate professor at Northeastern University who researches labor economics and youth development.

Still, Ms. Sasser Modestino said that taking high-paying jobs today and pursuing training later did not have to be mutually exclusive. Some people are getting jobs at places that offer tuition assistance while others can work and study at the same time.

Other students, like Ms. Calvo, might use the time to figure out what they want to do with their futures in ways that will leave them better off in the long run.

Plus, the economy could be shifting in ways that continue to keep workers in high demand. Baby boomers continue to age, and immigration has declined sharply during the pandemic, which could leave employers scrambling for employees for years. If that happens, degrees and certificates — labor market currency for much of the past two decades — may prove less essential.

“There comes a point at which there are so few high school graduates to play with that you have to give your pool cleaner a raise,” said Anthony Carnevale, the director of Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce. Plus, Mr. Carnevale said, economic policies coming out of Washington could add to the need for high-school-educated workers for a time. President Biden’s [infrastructure bill](#), passed last year, is expected to [create jobs](#) in construction and other fields as it directs investment toward bridge rebuilding and airport and port upgrades.

“We’re about to go through an era when you don’t need to go through college. That’s going to be a popular story,” he said.

Even before the pandemic, [people were increasingly questioning](#) the value of a college education. Many people do not complete their degree or certificate programs, leaving them without improved job prospects and often [crushing student loan](#) burdens. And higher education alone is not a panacea: Some certificates and qualifications [confer much greater](#) labor market benefits, while others offer a smaller wage premium.

But data and research continue to suggest that staying in school benefits workers over the long run. [Unemployment is consistently lower](#) for people with college degrees, and wages [increase notably](#) as education levels climb. The typical worker with only a high school diploma earned \$809 a week in 2021, while one with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,334.

"The high school job market has been declining since 1983," Mr. Carnevale said. [His research has shown](#) that after the early 1980s, degree holders began to widen their lifetime earnings advantage.

The economic resiliency that comes with education is what Luemettrea Williams is banking on. Ms. Williams, 34, has recently transferred to Nashville State as a nursing student.

She had been working for years as a medical assistant in a doctor's office, but got the job because she already knew the doctor; she did not have the relevant credential.

Early in the pandemic, the doctor asked her what she would do if he retired, and she realized it was time to return to school. She is working three jobs to pay her tuition, along with her rising gas and grocery bills. She and her 9-year-old daughter have moved in with her aunt, but Ms. Williams is confident she'll end up with a sturdy career at the end of her two-year program.

"That is No. 1: being able to have a stable income where I don't have to work three jobs to make ends meet," Ms. Williams said. "I just have to get through these two years, and my life will change."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Beijing relaxes rules; Covid fears linger
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/06/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases#beijing-covid-rules
GIST	<p>Beijing residents eagerly indulged in a privilege that they had not enjoyed in weeks: dining inside a restaurant.</p> <p>The Chinese capital relaxed pandemic rules at midnight on Monday, including a ban on dining in, after a partial lockdown that lasted more than a month. Although the closures were not as strict as in Shanghai, the authorities in Beijing had suspended some public transportation, forced some people to quarantine, and enforced work-from-home in much of the city.</p> <p>Yet even as schools and offices are opening in waves and public transportation is being restored, other measures remained in place to prevent the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant of the virus. Everyone must wear a mask, have their temperature check, and take P.C.R. tests for everyday activities like riding the subway or going to work.</p> <p>The measures underscore the commitment of Chinese authorities to stamp out the virus completely, despite curbing economic growth and fueling anger among citizens. The steps have triggered limited and small protests. Still, some cities plan to carry out regular mass testing even in the absence of a local outbreak.</p> <p>On Saturday, Liu Xiaofeng, deputy head of Beijing's municipal disease prevention and control center, said at a news conference that the city's overall epidemic situation was improving. But he warned that "decisive measures" were necessary to avoid a resurgence of cases.</p> <p>The authorities said there were six confirmed cases on Sunday in Beijing and 86 reported across the country, down from over 29,000 new daily infections at the height of this year's outbreak in mid-April. The majority of the cases during the peak were in Shanghai.</p>

It is unclear how long the relief may last, with cases re-emerging in Shanghai as it struggles to reopen after two months of harsh lockdown. On Sunday, the city reported three local community infections, prompting health officials to send a warning to its 25 million residents.

“The risk of epidemic rebound still exists,” Wu Jinglei, Shanghai’s health commissioner, told a Sunday news briefing. “We cannot relax yet, but must be highly vigilant.”

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HEADLINE	06/06 Musk threatens to end Twitter deal
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/technology/elon-musk-twitter.html
GIST	<p>In a crisp, six-paragraph letter to Twitter on Monday, lawyers for Elon Musk, the world’s richest man, made his displeasure known.</p> <p>Twitter was “actively resisting and thwarting” Mr. Musk’s rights while he was completing a \$44 billion deal to buy the social media service, the lawyers wrote. The company was “refusing Mr. Musk’s data requests” to disclose the number of fake accounts on its platform, they said. That amounted to a “clear material breach” of the deal, the lawyers continued, giving Mr. Musk the right to break off the agreement.</p> <p>The letter, which was delivered to Twitter and filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, escalated Mr. Musk’s campaign to terminate the blockbuster acquisition. After striking a deal to buy Twitter in April, Mr. Musk, 50, has repeatedly suggested that he may want to scrap the purchase. Monday’s letter featured the most direct words yet about his desire to pull out and crystallized his legal argument for doing so.</p> <p>It added another degree of uncertainty to whether Mr. Musk would complete the deal, even though he had waived his rights to do due diligence on Twitter when he bought it. The letter also raised the prospect of a contentious legal battle if one or the other side took the matter to court. If Mr. Musk pursued that route, the terms of the deal give Twitter the right to sue him to force a completion of the acquisition, if his debt financing for the purchase remains intact.</p> <p>The letter also provoked some eye-rolling. Mr. Musk, who leads the electric carmaker Tesla and the rocket company SpaceX, is famously mercurial and has often winged his wheeling and dealing, making his latest gambit not entirely unexpected.</p> <p>“This is a move Twitter investors have for weeks been steeling themselves for, the moment when Elon Musk’s haphazard ruminations in tweets have been distilled into an official letter to regulators,” wrote Susannah Streeter, a senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown. “The takeover was always destined to be a bumpy ride.”</p> <p>Twitter said the sale to Mr. Musk remained on course. “We intend to close the transaction and enforce the merger agreement at the agreed price and terms,” a spokesman said, adding that the company “will continue to cooperatively share information with Mr. Musk to consummate the transaction.”</p> <p>Behind the scenes, Twitter has shared information with Mr. Musk for about a month without any breakdown in communication, a person with knowledge of the situation said, requesting anonymity because the discussions were confidential. One of Twitter’s concerns in sharing the information is Mr. Musk’s prior statements, both publicly and to Twitter, that he was considering starting a rival social media service, two people familiar with the matter said. Typically, such matters are addressed by adding guardrails, like limiting who would have access to such information, and are negotiated before striking any deal.</p>

Sean Edgett, Twitter's general counsel, also sent an email to employees on Monday morning reiterating the company's commitment to closing the deal, according to a copy of the memo, which was obtained by The New York Times.

Twitter's stock fell 1.5 percent on Monday to close at \$39.56, far below the \$54.20 price per share that Mr. Musk agreed to pay for the company.

Mr. Musk did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Musk, who has complained about Twitter's fake accounts and bots for weeks, has appeared to get some traction on the issue with others. After Mr. Musk's letter to Twitter became public on Monday, [Ken Paxton](#), the Texas attorney general, said he was [opening an investigation](#) into the company "for potentially misleading Texans on the number of its 'bot' users," his office said in a statement.

Twitter declined to comment on Mr. Paxton's investigation.

When Mr. Musk agreed to buy Twitter in April, he said he wanted to take the company private, allow more free speech on the platform and improve the service's features. But in the weeks since, the stock market has plunged over fears of inflation, the war in Ukraine and supply chain challenges.

The downturn has hit shares of companies such as Tesla, which is Mr. Musk's main source of wealth. The turmoil has also rattled credit markets, potentially making it harder for banks to sell the debt that is typically raised to finance a takeover. Analysts have speculated that these factors have given Mr. Musk buyer's remorse about spending \$44 billion on the social media company.

In recent weeks, Mr. Musk has threatened to put the Twitter deal "on hold" over its number of fake accounts. Last month, he tweeted that "[the deal cannot move forward](#)" until Twitter shows "proof" that these accounts make up less than 5 percent of its users, as the company has repeatedly said. He also made similar remarks at a conference in Miami, indicating that he may be trying to lay the groundwork to rework the deal.

In doing so, Mr. Musk appeared to be building a case to argue that Twitter had experienced a "material adverse change" that would significantly affect its business, which could allow him to break off the deal. Yet legal experts have questioned the merits of that argument, particularly since Twitter has long disclosed that fake accounts represent about 5 percent of its users.

Mr. Musk's letter on Monday, though, represented a new strategy. Rather than simply saying that the billionaire did not believe Twitter's numbers, his lawyers said in the letter that the company was breaching its obligations by not giving Mr. Musk the information that he deemed important to the deal — in this case, how it accounts for its number of bots.

The lawyers wrote that Mr. Musk had "repeatedly" requested more information about how Twitter measured spam and fake accounts on its platform and that he had "made it clear that he does not believe the company's lax testing methodologies are adequate so he must conduct his own analysis."

They said Twitter's cooperation was necessary to secure the debt financing that banks have committed to fund the deal. Morgan Stanley and other lenders have committed [\\$13 billion](#) in debt to help pay for Mr. Musk's takeover. Those commitments are governed by the same legal contracts as the deal.

"What he is actually doing is a much more clever attempt to get out of the merger agreement," said Ann Lipton, a professor of corporate governance at Tulane Law School. "If Twitter were really stonewalling information requests, and those information requests were necessary or reasonable for Musk to be able to get his financing — which is what he's claiming in this letter — then that would conceivably be a breach that allows Musk to walk away."

Twitter could, in turn, argue it does not have the information that Mr. Musk is demanding, or that it is not necessary for the deal to close, she said.

A deal is expected to close by Oct. 24. If it does not close by then, either side [can walk away](#). If the transaction is delayed by regulatory approvals at that time, Mr. Musk and Twitter would have another six months to close it. The deal includes a \$1 billion breakup fee for both sides, under certain conditions.

In many respects, the agreement otherwise appears on track. Last week, Twitter announced it had [received regulatory clearance](#) from the Federal Trade Commission to proceed with its sale.

On the financing front, Mr. Musk disclosed [in a filing](#) last month that he had raised his personal cash commitment to the deal, canceling a planned loan against shares of Tesla. He also [said he was in talks with other Twitter shareholders](#), including the company's co-founder Jack Dorsey, about rolling their existing shares into the company after it is taken private.

For Twitter, completing the deal is existential. The company has faced difficulties delivering consistent financial results and increasing its numbers of users.

[Parag Agrawal](#), Twitter's chief executive, last month cut the company's discretionary spending and froze new hiring. Since [taking over in November](#), he has shaken up the company's top ranks and has plans for more changes. He has also asked employees to try to stay the course.

"I know we've been going through a period of uncertainty," he said at a recent company meeting. "We are shifting our focus back to our work."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Weapons reach Ukraine faster than training
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/world/europe/ukraine-advanced-weapons-training.html
GIST	<p>KHERSON REGION, Ukraine — Since Russia invaded, NATO nations have upgraded Ukraine's arsenal with increasingly sophisticated tools, with more promised, like the advanced multiple-launch rocket systems pledged by the United States and Britain.</p> <p>But training soldiers how to use the equipment has become a significant and growing obstacle — one encountered daily by Junior Sgt. Dmytro Pysanka and his crew, operating an aged antitank gun camouflaged in netting and green underbrush in southern Ukraine.</p> <p>Peering through the sight attached to the gun, Sergeant Pysanka is greeted with a kaleidoscope of numbers and lines that, if read correctly, should give him the calculations needed to fire at Russian forces. However, errors are common in the chaos of battle.</p> <p>More than a month ago, the commanders of his frontline artillery unit secured a far more advanced tool: a high-tech, Western-supplied laser range finder to help with targeting.</p> <p>But there's a hitch: Nobody knows how to use it.</p> <p>"It's like being given an iPhone 13 and only being able to make phone calls," said Sergeant Pysanka, clearly exasperated.</p> <p>The range finder, called a JIM LR, is like a pair of high-tech binoculars and likely part of the tranche of equipment supplied by the United States, said Sergeant Pysanka.</p> <p>It may seem like a perfect choice to help make better use of the antitank gun, built in 1985. It can see targets at night and transmit their distance, compass heading and GPS coordinates. Some soldiers learned</p>

enough to operate the tool, but then rotated elsewhere in recent days, leaving the unit with an expensive paperweight.

“I have been trying to learn how to use it by reading the manual in English and using Google Translate to understand it,” Sergeant Pysanka said.

On Monday, Britain promised to send Ukraine [mobile multiple-rocket launchers](#), improving the range and accuracy of Ukrainian artillery, days after President Biden [committed to sending similar weapons](#).

Ukraine’s most advanced new arms are concentrated in the eastern Donbas region, where the fiercest fighting rages as President Vladimir V. Putin’s forces — approaching from the east, north and south — try to crush a pocket of Ukrainian-held territory. At the eastern tip of that pocket, the two sides have waged a seesaw battle for the devastated, mostly abandoned city of Sievierodonetsk.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian troops regained some ground in the city, according to Western analysts and Ukrainian officials. But on Monday, the Ukrainians were forced back again as the Russian military ramped up its already intense artillery attack, according to Serhiy Haidai, Ukraine’s administrator for the region.

A day after a risky visit to troops in Lysychansk, near Sievierodonetsk, President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday gave journalists a blunt assessment of the challenge: “There are more of them. They are more powerful. But we have every chance to fight in this direction.”

Ukraine’s leaders frequently call for high-end Western weapons and equipment, pinning their hopes for victory to requests for new antitank guided missiles, howitzers and satellite-guided rockets.

But atop the need for the tools of war, Ukrainian troops need to know how to use them. Without proper training, the same dilemma facing Sergeant Pysanka’s unit and their lone range finder will be pervasive on a much larger scale. Analysts say that could echo the United States’ failed approach of supplying the Afghan military with equipment that couldn’t be maintained absent massive logistical support.

“Ukrainians are eager to employ Western equipment, but it requires training to maintain,” said Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va. “Some things it’s not easy to rush.”

The United States and other NATO countries gave extensive training to the Ukrainian military in the years before the war, though not on some of the advanced weapons they are now sending. From 2015 to early this year, U.S. military officials say, American instructors trained more than 27,000 Ukrainian soldiers at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center near Lviv. There were more than 150 American military advisers in Ukraine when Russia invaded in February, but they were withdrawn.

Since the beginning of the war, the United States has pledged roughly \$54 billion in aid for Ukraine and supplied a bevy of weapons and equipment, most recently several advanced HIMARS mobile rocket launchers, a move greeted with swift condemnation from the Kremlin.

But to avoid a more direct confrontation with Russia, the Biden administration has so far declined to send military advisers back into Ukraine to help train Ukrainian forces to use new weapons systems, and has instead relied on training programs outside the country.

This has put enormous pressure on Ukrainian soldiers like Sgt. Andriy Mykyta, a member of the country’s border guard who, before the war, received brief training from NATO advisers on the advanced British antitank weapons, known as NLAWs.

Now he races around frontline positions trying to educate his comrades on how to use them. In many cases, he said, Ukrainian soldiers learned how to use some weapons, including NLAWs, on their own, using online videos and practice.

“But there are types of weapons that you can’t learn from intuition: surface-to-air missiles, artillery and some gear,” Sergeant Mykyta said in a telephone interview. “So we need formal courses,” he added.

Ukraine’s needs are palpable in the region where Sergeant Pysanka’s unit is dug in, just northeast of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson. The area was the site of a brief Ukrainian offensive in the past week that slowed as soon as the retreating Russians destroyed a key bridge; the Ukrainians’ lack of longer-range artillery meant they were unable to attempt a difficult river crossing in pursuit, Ukrainian military officials said.

For Sergeant Pysanka’s gun team, the only instructor available for the laser range finder is a soldier who remained behind from the last unit and had taken time to translate most of the 104-page instruction manual. But it’s still trial and error as they figure out what combination of buttons do what, while searching for ad hoc solutions to solve the lack of a mounting tripod and video monitor (both of which are advertised in the instruction manual).

“If you’re working long distances while holding it by hand, sometimes it can transmit inaccurate figures,” Sergeant Pysanka said. “It is safer,” he added, “to work when the gear is stationed on the tripod facing the enemy and the operator is working with the monitor under cover.”

The JIM LR, made by the French company Safran, looks like a cross between a virtual reality headset and traditional binoculars, and can be used alongside a mapping application on a computer tablet that Ukrainian troops use to help call in artillery strikes.

At around six pounds, it is far smaller than the four-and-a-half-ton, U.S.-supplied M777 155 mm howitzer that has recently made its way to the frontline in Ukraine’s east. But both pieces of equipment have intricacies that are reminders of the complications that come from supplying a military with foreign matériel.

The M777 is highly mobile and capable of firing long distances, but training has been a bottleneck in deploying the howitzers, Ukrainian officers say. At courses in Germany that lasted a week, the United States trained soldiers to fire the weapon and others to maintain it.

But an oversight nearly delayed all maintenance on the guns at the hard-to-reach front lines, Ukrainian officers said. The entire M777 machine is put together on the imperial system used in the United States, meaning that using a Ukrainian metric wrench on it would be difficult, and would risk damaging the equipment.

Only after sending the guns did the United States arrange for a rushed shipment of toolboxes of imperial-gauge wrenches, said Maj. Vadim Baranik, the deputy commander of a maintenance unit.

But tools can be misplaced, lost or destroyed, potentially leaving guns inoperable unless someone scrounges up a U.S.-supplied wrench.

And the JIM LR, capable of displaying extremely accurate targeting data, supplies the information, known as grid coordinates, in a widely used NATO format that Sergeant Pysanka has to convert to the Soviet-era coordinate system used on the Ukrainians’ maps. Such minor speed bumps and chances for error add up, especially when under the stress of a Russian artillery barrage.

For now, Sergeant Pysanka is focused on learning the range finder. In his small slice of the war, Western-supplied weapons and equipment are limited to a small number of antitank rockets and first-aid kits.

“We can’t boast the same kind of resources that there are in the east,” said Maj. Roman Kovalyov, a deputy commander of the unit that oversees Sergeant Pysanka’s gun position. “What Ukraine gets, we can only see on the TV. But we believe that sooner or later it will turn up here.”

HEADLINE	06/06 Mexico president skips summit
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/6/andres-manuel-lopez-obrador-mexican-president-skip/
GIST	<p>Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Monday he will not attend the Summit of Americas in California this week because certain Western Hemisphere countries, led by communists or socialists, were excluded.</p> <p>Mr. Lopez Obrador said during his daily press conference that he would send Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard in his place. Honduras also announced it will send a lower-level delegation.</p> <p>The boycott will be seen as a swipe at President Biden, who is hosting the event and decided against inviting Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela because of their poor records on human rights and democracy.</p> <p>“The president’s principled position is that we do not believe dictators should be invited,” said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.</p> <p>Ms. Jean-Pierre tried to patch over the public rift with a U.S. neighbor, saying Mexico is sending dignitaries to the summit and Mr. Lopez Obrador and his wife will come to the White House in July for bilateral meetings.</p> <p>She also said Mr. Biden’s role on this side of the world remains in good standing.</p> <p>“The U.S. remains the most powerful force in driving hemispheric actions to address core challenges facing the people of the Americas — inequality, health, climate and food security,” she said. “The president continues to be a leader in the hemisphere.”</p> <p>The summit will be held in Los Angeles this week. The White House has said Mr. Biden, who will travel Wednesday to Los Angeles, will use the event to push for a more “secure, middle class and democratic” region.</p> <p>However, some critics said excluding nations will make it more difficult to solve regional problems.</p> <p>Mr. Lopez Obrador had signaled for weeks that he might skip the event, which is held every three years, if some countries were excluded. Ms. Jean-Pierre said Mr. Biden was aware of Mr. Lopez Obrador’s decision before he announced it Monday.</p> <p>Sen. Robert Menendez, New Jersey Democrat and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chided Mr. Lopez Obrador and said his absence could “set back efforts to continue repairing the relationship” between Mexico and the U.S., which the senator characterized as broken by former President Donald Trump.</p> <p>Mr. Menendez said he supported Mr. Biden’s decision to set limits on who may attend the summit.</p> <p>“The summit is an opportunity for democracies — not authoritarian thugs — from across the hemisphere to forge an agenda that advances our shared prosperity and democratic values,” he said. “From the beginning of his administration, President Biden made clear he would focus on restoring U.S. credibility and leadership in the worldwide campaign to strengthen democratic governments and counter authoritarian forces.”</p> <p>China sought to take advantage of divisions across the globe. The communist government in Beijing said Monday that the U.S. is losing its grip on the region.</p> <p>“I want to stress again that Latin America is not some front yard or backyard of the U.S. The ‘Summit of the Americas’ is not the ‘Summit of America,’” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at his regular press conference. “The U.S., as the host of the upcoming summit, needs to stop going its own way or forcing its will on others. It should instead show due respect for Latin American and Caribbean</p>

	countries and listen with humility to the legitimate concerns and voices for justice of the majority of regional countries.”
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HEADLINE	06/07 Russian-language Ukraine TV channel
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/russian-language-ukrainian-tv-channel-aims-to-topple-putin
GIST	<p>In a 19th-century building in the heart of Kyiv, a group of journalists were hard at work. Olga Volkona, a TV presenter, was preparing to interview a military expert. In a nearby room, reporters were posting content to Telegram, YouTube and Facebook. Others were preparing for the launch next week of an online newspaper.</p> <p>The channel, February Morning, has one ambitious and seemingly impossible goal: to topple Vladimir Putin. Unlike other media outlets operating in Ukraine, it is exclusively aimed at an audience living in Russia. Its 70 staff are Ukrainian and Russian. Some of them work in provincial Russian towns, as part of an undercover network.</p> <p>The channel’s founder, Ilya Ponomarev, used to be a member of Russia’s parliament. In 2014 he was the only deputy to vote against the annexation of Crimea. A vengeful Kremlin then chucked him out of the Duma and barred him when he was on a trip to the US from re-entering his own country. Based in Kyiv, he became a Ukrainian citizen in 2019.</p> <p>“I love this idea,” Ponomarev said, pointing to the white-blue-white flag that forms the channel’s live studio backdrop. It is the Russian tricolour “minus the red blood”, he said. It was also the flag of Veliky Novgorod, one of Russia’s oldest cities, famed for its medieval democracy until its takeover by Ivan the Terrible.</p> <p>The most effective way of ending Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is to bring down the regime in Moscow, Ponomarev said. With Putin in power, there is every prospect the conflict could drag on for years, even decades. “Our job at the end of the day is an uprising of the masses,” he said. “We need individuals to see they are not alone.”</p> <p>Ponomarev conceded it would be difficult to persuade Russians conditioned by years of state TV propaganda to turn on their government. But he said there were two groups who formed a promising constituency. One was younger urban liberals and supporters of the jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Many have recently emigrated.</p> <p>The other was Russia’s frustrated working class, fed up with corruption and misrule. Often leftwing and largely disorganised, they had not fled abroad and were more likely to carry out acts of civil disobedience, he said. Since February, activists have burned down several Russian military recruitment offices, tasked with sending soldiers to Ukraine.</p> <p>The former MP claimed “limited” credit for these mini-attacks, which have featured extensively on February Morning’s media outlet, Rospartizan. The channel gives tips on bomb making and how to thwart Russia’s FSB spy agency by turning off mobile phone location settings. These “small tricks” were taught in the early Putin era at left-faction summer camps, he said.</p> <p>Russia’s opposition is famous for its internal feuds and backbiting. Ponomarev has previously been critical of Navalny. He described him as an ally in the struggle to get rid of Putin but alleged that Navalny’s controlling tendencies made him unfit to be president. Ponomarev said his vision was of a decentralised bottom-up Russia where local communities make their own decisions.</p> <p>February Morning’s Ukrainian chief editor, Larisa Rybalchenko, said it would take time before she and her editorial colleagues change Russian society. “It will be a long journey. There is a lot of</p>

disinformation out there, especially about the war. But it's essential for Russia and for Ukraine," she said. Last week Russian troops seized her home town, Svitlodarsk, in the Donetsk region.

Since the invasion, the Kremlin has launched an unprecedented media crackdown. It has closed down the country's last independent sources of news, including the paper [Novaya Gazeta](#), the radio station Echo Moskvyy and the [TV channel Rain](#). Numerous journalists have been branded "foreign agents". Using the word "war" is a criminal offence; the Kremlin term is "special operation".

Ponomarev said he was looking for western sources of funding for his channel. But he said London and Washington were wary of promoting "regime change" in Russia, even though that is what they privately want. The Biden administration is providing Kyiv with [\\$40bn in arms and humanitarian aid](#). It says it is not trying to remove Putin.

Asked whether he was now a foreign agent in the eyes of the Kremlin, Ponomarev said: "I would be proud if they called me that. Terrorist, extremist, it's an act of recognition." He added: "Unfortunately they are really smart. They have ensured there are no visible political figures among leftists and nationalists. We need to offer a credible vision for Russia's future."

The channel wants to build a second studio on its balcony, which overlooks central Kyiv and a sky of screeching summer swifts. The news operation costs \$1m a year. Ponomarev said he covered running costs himself, from funds accumulated during a successful career as a Silicon Valley investor. His own political views were those of a "left-libertarian anarchist", he said.

The young rebels plotting in tiny groups against the mighty Russian state were similar to the social revolutionaries of more than a century ago, he said. They fought to bring down the tsar and to give land to the peasants. In February 1917 they succeeded in removing the government – only to see the Bolsheviks and Lenin take over the revolution and seize power.

"Elites in Russia are dissatisfied. But right now they are not scared enough," said Ponomarev. "They need to see the ghost of 1917."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Ukraine: need many more rocket launchers
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/ukraine-needs-many-more-rocket-launchers-from-west-says-adviser
GIST	<p>Ukraine needs 60 multiple rocket launchers – many more than the handful promised so far by the UK and US – to have a chance of defeating Russia, according to an aide to the country's presidency.</p> <p>Oleksiy Arestovych, a military adviser to the president's chief of staff, told the Guardian that while he believed the rocket launchers were "a gamechanger weapon", not enough had been committed to turn the tide in the war.</p> <p>"The fewer we get, the worse our situation will be. Our troops will continue to die and we will continue to lose ground," Arestovych said, particularly if countries with dozens of systems only "decide to donate four or five".</p> <p>On Monday Britain said it would donate a handful of M270 tracked rocket launchers, carrying missiles with a range of about 50 miles, a few days after the US said it would donate four similar truck-based high mobility artillery rocket systems (Himars).</p> <p>Arestovych said Ukraine needed many times more multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), which have a range far greater than anything in the country's existing arsenal.</p>

“If we get 60 of these systems then the Russians will lose all ability to advance anywhere, they will be stopped dead in their tracks. If we get 40 they will advance, albeit very slowly with heavy casualties; with 20 they will continue to advance with higher casualties than now,” he said.

The US army has 363 Himars and 225 M270 rocket launchers, and the US Marines have a further 47, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, while the UK has 35 of its version of the M270s – indicating there could be capacity to supply more to Ukraine.

Russia has repeatedly said it will intensify its offensive in Ukraine if the longer-range rockets are delivered. Sergei Lavrov, Russia’s foreign minister, said on Monday: “The longer the range of weapons you supply, the farther away the line from where neo-Nazis [the Ukrainians] could threaten the Russian Federation will be pushed.”

On Sunday Vladimir Putin said Moscow would strike “fresh targets” in Ukraine if the west stepped up its weapons deliveries. Early on Sunday morning Russia launched a cruise missile strike on a railway depot in an eastern suburb of Kyiv, the first time the capital had been struck in more than five weeks.

The latest public lobbying from Ukraine came as a battle for control raged in the small eastern city of Sievierodonetsk, with Kyiv’s forces trying to mount a counterattack after Russia nearly succeeded in capturing it at the end of last week.

Serhiy Haidai, the governor of Luhansk, where the city is situated, said on Monday morning that “the situation has worsened a little for us”, having reached a point where Ukrainian forces had “liberated almost half of the city”.

Later on Monday Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, struck a more pessimistic note, telling journalists in Kyiv that while his country’s forces were holding out, “there are more of them [Russians] and they are stronger”. Ukraine’s military losses have been estimated by insiders at 150 deaths a day and 800 wounded.

Haidai said shelling had increased tenfold in Sievierodonetsk and neighbouring Lysychansk, still held by Ukraine, and there were other reports of intense fighting involving machine gun, mortar and artillery fire and thousands of troops.

Overnight it emerged that Zelenskiy had visited nearby frontlines on Sunday to raise soldiers’ morale. The president revealed he had taken a risky trip to Lysychansk and nearby Soledar that at one point took him a couple of kilometres from Russian positions.

“We also brought you something from them,” Zelenskiy added in a selfie video released in the small hours. “It is important. We brought confidence. And strength. I wish them health. Low bow to their parents. I wish victory to all of us.”

Arestovych said Zelenskiy had wanted to “display support for the troops” because the fighting in the Donbas area was “pretty hard for us”. The president also wanted to repel “Russian disinformation” that he “sits in his bunker in Kyiv and couldn’t care less about the frontline”.

Ukrainian strategists said they had tried to lure Russian forces into overextending themselves in Sievierodonetsk, in the hope of blunting the operational effectiveness of the invading force. Although 120 Russian battalions remain inside Ukraine, Kyiv believes they are operating at 40% or 50% strength at present.

Russia, however, has been making slow but steady progress in the Donbas region, advancing at a rate of about 500 metres to 1km a day in recent weeks, largely by concentrating its efforts on an increasingly small portion of the frontline: in the area around Sievierodonetsk, where there is a bulge in Ukraine’s positions.

	<p>Arestovych said Ukraine's principal problem was that while it was able to inflict casualties on the Russians and blunt their advances in the Donbas and across a 800-mile (1,300km) frontline, it was far more difficult to push back the occupiers. Militaries typically need to secure a 3:1 battlefield advantage or more to have a prospect of victory.</p> <p>"We need four to five brigades of heavy weaponry to be able to conduct a proper counter-offensive and to make it successful. We have the manpower, we don't have the armaments," Arestovych said. "To be on an offensive is about five times harder than being on the defensive."</p> <p>The adviser said his greatest fear was that the west would stop sending weapons to Ukraine, "because that will be going back to the original situation prior to the war, of long and static frontlines, this time three times more of our land having been captured than before".</p> <p>Elsewhere, Russia's defence ministry said its forces had killed more than 450 "nationalists" in Horlivka and Kodema, north of Donetsk, and destroyed parts of an armoured vehicle repair facility in the Kharkiv region. There was no word on the reported deaths from the Ukrainian side.</p> <p>In Russia, the governor of the Kursk region, Roman Starovoit, said the village of Tyotkino, near the border with Ukraine, had come under fire from the Ukrainian side that had targeted a bridge and some businesses on Monday morning.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 Day 104 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/07/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-104-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, admitted that Russian forces have the numerical advantage in the battle for the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk, but insisted that Ukraine's forces had "every chance" of fighting back. "Our heroes do not give up positions in Sievierodonetsk. In the city, fierce street fighting continues," he said in his latest national address, adding "the Ukrainian Donbas stands strong." Sievierodonetsk and its sister city of Lysychansk "are dead cities today," Zelenskiy said. • The Ukraine president also said he believed Russian troops intend to capture the city of Zaporizhzhia, a large industrial hub in the south-east of the country, which would allow its military to advance closer to central areas. "There are more of them, they are more powerful, but we have every chance to fight on this direction," he said. • Russia has begun handing over bodies of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks, the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow's invasion. Dozens of bodies have been transferred to Kyiv, where DNA testing is under way to identify the remains, according to both a military leader and a spokesperson for the Azov battalion. • Russian officials in occupied Mariupol have shut down the southern port city for quarantine over a possible cholera outbreak, according to Ukrainian authorities. Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to the mayor of Mariupol, said the Russian-occupied city is bracing itself for an epidemic as dead bodies and litter are piling up in the city. • Sexual violence in Ukraine remains prevalent and underreported as Russia's invasion is "turning into a human trafficking crisis" according to the UN. "Women and children fleeing the conflict are being targeted for trafficking and exploitation" Pramila Patten, the United Nations special representative on sexual violence, told a UN security council on Monday. "Sexual violence is the most consistently and massively under-reported violation." • The Ukrainian navy said it has pushed back a fleet of Russian warships more than 100km from its Black Sea coast. The group of Russian vessels were "forced to change tactics" after carrying out a naval blockade on Ukraine's coast for weeks, the navy command of Ukraine's armed forces said on Facebook. It has not been possible to independently verify this information. • Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, said Moscow would respond to western deliveries of long-range weapons to Ukraine by pushing back Kyiv's forces further from Russia's borders. Lavrov's remarks come after Britain's defence secretary, Ben Wallace, said the UK will

	<p>send long-range rocket artillery to Ukraine, in the hope they can disrupt the concentrated Russian artillery that has been pounding cities in eastern Ukraine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zelenskiy thanked the UK for providing precisely the weapons Kyiv says it needs to fight Russia. Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister said, had shown “complete understanding” of his country’s needs, a reaction to the British government’s decision Monday to supply Ukraine with multiple-launch rocket systems that can strike targets up to 80km (50 miles) away. • Ukraine needs 60 multiple rocket launchers – many more than the handful promised so far by the UK and US – to have a chance of defeating Russia, according to an aide to the country’s presidency. Oleksiy Arestovych, a military adviser to the president’s chief of staff, told the Guardian that while he believed the rocket launchers were “a gamechanger weapon”, not enough had been committed to turn the tide in the war. • The Kremlin has described a move by three eastern European countries to block Lavrov from flying to Serbia as a “hostile action”. Lavrov was due to hold talks in Belgrade on Monday with the Serbian president, Aleksandar Vučić, but was forced to cancel his visit after the countries around Serbia – Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro – closed their airspace to his aircraft. • Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said there were credible reports that Russia was “pilfering” Ukraine’s grain exports to sell for its own profit. Blinken said the alleged theft was part of broader Russian actions to export Ukraine’s wheat crop and worsen a global food security crisis. “Now, Russia is hoarding its food exports as well,” he said. Zelenskiy said there could be as many as 75m tonnes of grain stuck in Ukraine by autumn. • European Council president Charles Michel accused Russia of using food supplies as “a stealth missile against developing countries” and blamed the Kremlin for the looming global food crisis. “This is driving up food prices, pushing people into poverty, and destabilising entire regions. Russia is solely responsible for this food crisis,” Michel told a council meeting on Monday, prompting Moscow’s UN ambassador to walk out. • US authorities have charged the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich with exporting two planes of US origin to Russia without a licence. Prosecutors say both planes – a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner and a Gulfstream G650ER – were flown in March to Russia, in violation of US sanctions imposed on Moscow in response to its invasion of Ukraine. • The families of Russian national guard members who have died in Ukraine and Syria will receive a one-time payment of 5m rubles (£65,000 or \$80,000), according to a Kremlin decree.
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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle RV camp near golf course expands
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/homeless/rv-camp-near-beacon-hill-expands/281-02ef8d31-e8fd-4018-a735-47f171b7f9f7
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — It is against the law in Seattle to park a vehicle on the street for more than 72 hours without moving. However, at a popular golf course on Beacon Hill, it appears an RV camp in its parking lot is expanding.</p> <p>The growing camp of recreational vehicles in the parking lot near city-owned Jefferson Park Golf Course along Beacon Avenue South has some nearby residents concerned.</p> <p>"Certainly, in the last year, year and a half it's just boomed," said Michael Lowe. "It's probably doubled and tripled, not just the amount of people the materials, the vans are getting bigger and there's tents."</p> <p>Back in December of last year we first showed you this site, along with Jay Turner, who's owned "Red Bird Sports," located just a couple blocks away, for 36 years.</p> <p>"To turn a blind eye on that and to let it fester and grow is shameful," said Turner.</p> <p>Turner was frustrated then, and is even more frustrated now. He appreciates the work the city has done the last couple months at similar encampments across the city, but believes more attention needs to be brought to his neighborhood.</p>

"The thing with the south end of Seattle, it seems like it's always been ignored, it's always the last one to see anything," said Turner.

There has been an increase in sweeps, and the city has been re-enforcing the 72-hour parking rule starting back in October 2021, which prohibits a person from parking their vehicle on the same block of a city street for more than 72 hours. Turner said, however, that not much has been done and he is calling on the city once again to step up.

"Since October 2021, there have been about 3,500 citations written in relation to the 72 hour rule, and about 1,800 unoccupied or abandoned vehicles impounded due to the 72-hour rule," A spokesperson from SDOT told KING 5. "For most of that time period we were focused on unoccupied, abandoned and hazardous vehicles. So that status is generally not referring to vehicles which someone is living in."

Officials with [Seattle Public Utilities](#) said they did a "thorough clean" last week, disposing over three thousand pounds of trash and debris at the site

The site is on the list for an upcoming remediation according to SPU spokesperson Sabrina Register. No timeline was given, however.

"During RV remediations, the city first provides warning and encourages people to move their vehicles in order to avoid receiving a citation or having their vehicle impounded," Register added. "If a person is living in a vehicle, then we will make multiple attempts to notify or talk to that person to encourage them to move their vehicle. Impoundment will only occur as a last resort if a person ignores the warnings and refuses to temporarily move while SPU performs the remediation."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Snohomish Co. sheriff faces staff shortages
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/snohomish-county-permanently-re-assigning-specialty-units-patrol-staffing-shortages/281-e4b44930-cf00-48ef-9649-a776aaf10ec9
GIST	<p>SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. — Starting later this month, the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office will permanently re-assign several specialty units to help cover patrol crews due to staffing shortages across the department, the sheriff said in a letter to the public Monday afternoon.</p> <p>Sheriff Adam Fortney said the Office of Neighborhoods (OON), Directed Patrol (DP) and the K-9 unit will be among the specialty units re-assigned to patrol crews to fill current vacancies in the department.</p> <p>The re-assignments will start "mid-June," Fortney said in the letter.</p> <p>"While the following staffing decisions were hard to make, I also know it is the right decision at this moment in history to ensure we can protect our community and protect our first responders," Fortney said.</p> <p>Fortney said the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office set a hiring record in 2021, but it has not been sustainable in 2022 as "law enforcement officers around our state are choosing to leave this profession at a faster rate than we can hire."</p> <p>So far this year, 30 deputies have resigned or retired, according to the sheriff's office. The office has hired 16 deputies who are currently training.</p> <p>The sheriff's office has 27 deputy vacancies.</p> <p>The sheriff said staffing shortages and criminals "becoming more emboldened and more violent" have created a safety issue for Snohomish County deputies on patrol.</p>

	<p>In the last three weeks, four Snohomish County deputies were sent to the hospital and there were three calls to help officers being seriously assaulted, Fortney said.</p> <p>In his 20 years working patrol for Snohomish County, Fournney said he heard just three calls to help an officer, a mark that has been matched in the past month alone.</p> <p>The most recent incident involving a deputy pushed Fortney to re-assign specialty units to cover patrol. He said a deputy was severely assaulted in south Snohomish County to the point where he was not able to call for additional help. It was then, Fortney said, he felt he needed to make "drastic changes" to staffing to safely respond to 911 calls.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Gas prices soaring in Seattle, western WA
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/traffic/gas-prices/gas-prices-seattle-rise-16-cents-in-one-week-averaging-548-per-gallon/281-07ab3662-fd94-4501-9236-e42c4b3ab2bc
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Gasoline prices continue to soar in Seattle and across western Washington.</p> <p>In the last week, average gas prices in Seattle have risen 15.9 cents per gallon, according to a GasBuddy survey of 775 stations in the city. That puts the city's average at \$5.48 per gallon.</p> <p>Gas prices in Seattle are 56.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and \$1.78 per gallon higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy. The average price to fill up on June 6, 2021, was \$3.70 per gallon. Just last month, the average price for a gallon of regular gas in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett area hit \$5 for the first time, according to AAA.</p> <p>Price reports from GasBuddy show the cheapest gas station in Seattle was \$4.89 per gallon Sunday, while the most expensive station was at \$6.29 per gallon.</p> <p>Neighboring areas are experiencing a meteoric rise in prices, too. Tacoma's average gas price reached \$5.40 per gallon Sunday. That's up 19.2 cents per gallon from last week's mark.</p> <p>Yakima's gas prices are 23.5 cents per gallon more expensive than last week, putting the city's average price at \$5.23 per gallon, according to GasBuddy.</p> <p>GasBuddy said the lowest fuel price in Washington state was at a station offering \$4.69 per gallon of gas.</p> <p>Nationally, the average price of gas has risen 26.0 cents per gallon in the last seven days. Now the average sits at \$4.85 per gallon.</p> <p>The national average skyrocketed 56.0 cents per gallon in the last month and is \$1.81 per gallon higher than a year ago.</p> <p>At the same time, diesel has risen 11.5 cents nationally in the past week and sits at \$5.62 per gallon, GasBuddy said in its latest survey of over 150,000 gas stations across the United States.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Spokane gas prices up 57.2 cents in month
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/gas-prices-washington-spokane/293-6aab4d40-4c1d-4836-a5de-ccc621a6d160
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — The average price of gas in Spokane is up 18.1 cents per gallon since last week, bringing the cost to \$5.07 per gallon, according to GasBuddy's weekly survey of 187 stations in Spokane.</p>

	<p>Prices in Spokane are 57.2 cents per gallon higher than a month ago, as of Monday. According to GasBuddy, the cheapest gas station in Spokane on Sunday, was \$4.87 a gallon, while the most expensive was \$5.39 per gallon.</p> <p>Washington state's average gas price is up 16 cents from last week, which is \$4.88 per gallon, according to a GasBuddy survey.</p> <p>In Idaho, the average price of gas last week was \$4.72 a gallon compared with \$4.88 as of Monday. In Yakima, the average price per gallon went up 23.5 cents in a week, from \$4.99 per gallon to \$5.23 a gallon as of Monday.</p> <p>The price of diesel has risen 11.5 cents nationally in the past week and stands at \$5.62 per gallon, according to GasBuddy weekly press release.</p> <p>“After a blistering week of gas prices jumping in nearly every town, city, state and area possible, more bad news is on the horizon. It now appears not if, but when, we'll hit that psychologically critical \$5 national average,” Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, said in a written statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Idaho housing market losing steam
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/idaho-housing-market-losing-its-steam/293-fc4306b9-70cb-42f0-8acd-d1f76c3dca21
GIST	<p>COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — The once screaming hot Idaho housing market seems to be losing its steam, as reported by our news partners, the Coeur d'Alene Press.</p> <p>“I think we're headed toward a more normal market,” said Chad Oakland with Northwest Realty Group.</p> <p>According to Redfin, a real estate brokerage, 41% of Boise home sellers dropped their prices in April. Many sellers in Coeur d'Alene are doing the same, Oakland said, as rising mortgage interest rates to more than 5% have given buyers good reason to pause.</p> <p>“It takes a lot of buying power from people,” Oakland said Friday.</p> <p>And it is bringing prices down.</p> <p>Rocket Homes reported that the median home price in May in Kootenai County was \$521,000, down 30.8% from a month ago.</p> <p>The asking price for one Dalton Gardens, five-bedroom, 2,500-square-foot home was reduced to \$949,000 on Friday.</p> <p>Multiple offers are no longer flying fast and furious on every new home on the market. People have stopped buying homes sight unseen, which has caught sellers by surprise.</p> <p>“If it's on the market for two weeks and there aren't any offers, people wonder what's going on,” Oakland said.</p> <p>One contributing factor is pricing.</p> <p>According to a recent analysis from Moody's, Coeur d'Alene was seventh in a list of most overvalued markets, with prices at 56% overpriced. Boise was No. 1 at 73% over value.</p> <p>“Near-record-low mortgage rates helped fuel demand for housing, especially during the pandemic, and the competition for homes pushed prices higher. But now the Federal Reserve is raising rates to curtail</p>

inflation, and already that's cooling demand," said Ken H. Johnson, Ph.D., an economist in FAU's College of Business.

In another study, researchers with Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University found the housing markets in Spokane and Boise were among the most overpriced.

According to Redfin, Coeur d'Alene home prices were up 40.3% in April compared to last year, selling for a median price of \$675,000. On average, homes in Coeur d'Alene sell after five days on the market compared to six days last year, Redfin reported. There were 88 homes sold in April this year, down from 106 last year.

Coeur d'Alene Councilman Dan Gookin said Thursday that the battle for affordable housing in the city has been lost.

Oakland said previous mortgage interest rates in the 3% range put higher-priced homes within reach of more buyers, but inflation changes all that.

The latest rates near 5.5% have pushed a large pool of those potential buyers out of the market.

"I think we're seeing some push back on pricing," Oakland said.

According to the Coeur d'Alene Regional Realtors, the median home price in Kootenai County was \$549,950 in April, up nearly 25% from the previous year.

Just six months ago, in December, the median price of a Kootenai County home was \$480,000.

Lindsay Allen, president of the Coeur d'Alene Regional Realtors, said interest rates are having the biggest impact on the housing market.

"It cuts more people out, especially in the affordable price range," she said.

Oakland said there is still buying power out there and there are still multiple offers on some homes. But those cases tend to be in niche markets, like downtown Coeur d'Alene or around Lake Coeur d'Alene.

And inventory is growing.

According to the Coeur d'Alene Regional Realtors, there were 160 homes on the market in Kootenai County in January. In February, it was 192. In March, 289, in April, 441. May numbers were not available on Friday.

"It is impossible to underprice a house," Oakland said. "It's super easy to overprice it."

Oakland expects to see less competition for new inventory coming on the market.

He said he does not believe there will be a major downturn in the housing market, "but maybe slight price adjustments with more choices for buyers and longer market times."

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HEADLINE	06/07 Fiji hands over superyacht to US
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/07/world/europe/fiji-superyacht-russia-oligarch.html
GIST	Fiji has handed over to the United States a \$325 million superyacht that American investigators say is owned by a Russian billionaire on a U.S. sanctions list, the island nation's top prosecutor said on Tuesday. The handover of the yacht, the Amadea, was based on a decision by Fiji's Supreme Court and is a new development in a global effort to seize the assets of oligarchs with ties to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

	<p>The Amadea was held in Fijian waters in April in response to a U.S. request for assistance and seized last month based on a warrant that had been issued by a federal court in Washington and accepted by a Fijian court.</p> <p>The Amadea’s ownership structure is murky. American investigators say that the yacht was sold last year to Suleiman Kerimov, a Russian government official and billionaire investor who has been on the U.S. sanctions list since 2018. But Feizal Haniff, a lawyer in Fiji who represents a company in the British Virgin Islands that controls the vessel, has argued that its true owner is Eduard Khudainatov, a wealthy Russian who is not under U.S. sanctions.</p> <p>Fiji’s Court of Appeal dismissed Mr. Haniff’s appeal in late May but said that the judgment would not take effect for seven days. Last week, he filed another application asking the Fijian authorities to delay enforcing the U.S. warrant.</p> <p>On Tuesday, the country’s Supreme Court ruled that the yacht could leave Fiji in the care of the U.S. authorities, Christopher Pryde, the country’s director of public prosecutions, said in a statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Summit of the Americas opens in L.A.
SOURCE	https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2022-06-06/summit-of-the-americas-opens-in-los-angeles
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — It was the early 1990s, and the Western world seemed full of promise. The Soviet Union had collapsed, and the Cold War that had gripped and shaped global politics for decades was over.</p> <p>So were many of the wars in Central America and some of the most intractable and brutal military dictatorships in South America, from Argentina and Chile to Brazil.</p> <p>Then-President Clinton seized on the moment and the Summit of the Americas was born, with the inaugural event held in Miami in 1994. All of the countries of the Western Hemisphere except Cuba joined to debate trade, prosperity, immigration and democracy. And every one of the governments involved had been democratically elected, a sign of major progress.</p> <p>Now, as the U.S. prepares to host the summit in Los Angeles this week, the first time the event has been hosted in this country since 1994, many of those involved with the inaugural effort are wondering what happened to the spirit of collaboration, and why division and acrimony have come to overshadow the joint effort.</p> <p>And an even more existential question remains: Has this type of summit outlived its usefulness?</p> <p>“It was a good moment,” Mack McLarty, Clinton’s special representative to the Summit of the Americas, said in an interview, recalling the events of 1994. “Cooperation, trust and relationship were truly there. It was a rising tide.”</p> <p>McLarty said he holds out hope that President Biden’s administration can “set up a bridge” to reengage with other countries in the region. But many believe the window that opened nearly 30 years ago has for the most part closed. Progress from what was seen as a watershed moment in 1994 was unraveling before the decade was out.</p> <p>The most glaring evidence of regression has come in the form of decisions or threats from several leaders to boycott the event, a position unheard of in 1994 and in most summits that have occurred since, taking place every three or four years. That problem has thrown the White House’s preparations for the summit into a chaotic scramble, creating bad optics for a president who has prided himself on his familiarity with Latin America.</p>

Just a few days before the summit's Monday start, the White House and State Department again declined to confirm which nations would attend, having demurred for weeks when asked about invitations to the event.

As many of the region's governments turn away from democracy and an emphasis on the rule of law, they feel freer to disengage from the U.S., where democratic principles have also been struggling. Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has said he won't attend after the Biden administration announced it would not invite Cuba, Venezuela or Nicaragua. Bolivia followed Mexico's lead, and several Central American countries are still on the fence.

"The diminishing influence of the United States in Latin America is a byproduct of toxic polarization" both here and to the south, said Manuel Orozco, an expert at the Inter-American Dialogue think tank. "We haven't had the leadership to show why democracy matters. Politics and democracy are not talking to each other."

The Biden administration has downplayed expectations for the summit in an apparent attempt to spare itself embarrassment, insisting it doesn't really matter if some countries don't attend.

"Look, I mean, with Mexico and those others, we have made very clear that participation won't impact cooperation or even a level of ambition [that existed] certainly before — well before the summit," Juan Gonzalez, the head of Western Hemisphere affairs at the U.S. National Security Council, said in a telephone conference with journalists.

Still, U.S. officials have emphasized immigration will be a centerpiece issue of the summit. Some experts have questioned what progress can be made if Mexico and some of the Central American countries that are the sources of most of the illegal immigration into the U.S. are not present at the event. The summit will also focus on other immigration issues, namely the millions of Venezuelans who have left their country to settle in neighboring Colombia and Brazil, along with other South American nations.

Cynthia Arnson, a longtime Latin America specialist and distinguished fellow at the Wilson Center research institute, said that "some of the countries may be playing coy [about their attendance] to extract maximum benefits."

For example, Brazil's right-wing populist President Jair Bolsonaro announced he would not attend — until the White House promised him a bilateral meeting with Biden. Similarly, Argentina's leftist President Alberto Fernández was on the fence until a couple of days ago, after Biden telephoned him personally.

"There is no question that U.S. influence is less today than in previous decades," Arnson added. "That said, at a time of erosion of democracy throughout the region, the Biden administration is taking the lead in defending democracy."

Another game-changing factor in the shifting relations: China.

In 1994, the United States was the only game in town, with an economy much larger than any other country in the hemisphere. China was not the player it is today, and many countries still had diplomatic relations with Taiwan, not Beijing.

But today, China has grown exponentially and has made deep inroads into Latin America through its \$4.3-trillion Belt and Road infrastructure and import-export initiative, of particular appeal to governments that don't want to be challenged on democratic practices or human rights.

"The U.S. is giving this constant message to Latin American countries: Don't do business with China. It's bad for you," Arnson said. "But what the U.S. has to offer is still not clear. ... The United States needs to show it's putting skin in the game."

She noted that while China is pouring money into the region, several overtures from Latin American nations about free-trade agreements with the U.S. have gone unanswered. Trade is an increasingly polarizing domestic political issue, further complicating any steps by Biden.

A hallmark of the 1994 summit was a proposal for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, an ambitious plan to eliminate trade barriers throughout the region. However, it fell apart a few years later when officials could not agree on final terms.

“We always refer to the golden decade, the ‘90s, when it comes to democracy and human rights,” said Santiago Cantón, a former human rights official in his native Argentina and now a visiting scholar at the American University Washington College of Law. “Right now the situation is completely different,” he added, noting severe deterioration of democracy throughout the hemisphere.

Current and former officials present at the first Summit of the Americas agreed that the spirit of 1994 is all but dead.

“From our perspective, it was an exciting opportunity with Latin America and the Caribbean,” said Eric Farnsworth, who worked with McLarty in the Clinton White House and is now vice president of the Council of the Americas and Americas Society. “You had mutual interests. It was a region deciding to come together. And it was a different leadership class, more technocratic, focused on growth. There was a chance to promote a different path.”

Farnsworth and others say the halcyon days of 1994 began to fall away just five years later. In Venezuela, former military commander Hugo Chávez, a charismatic, firebrand socialist, won an election and was sworn in as president. He stayed in power until his death in 2013, buoyed by spikes in the price of oil, Venezuela’s main export. His hand-picked successor, Nicolás Maduro, oversaw the destruction of Venezuela’s economy, healthcare system and any remaining democratic freedoms.

Chávez inspired leftists in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Argentina. But on both the left and right, there were presidents and prime ministers who sought to remain in power indefinitely, or at least beyond the term limits set in most countries. They had little patience to be lectured on democracy and human rights by the U.S., where those commitments are no longer ironclad.

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington also drastically shifted the United States’ focus and transformed its interests.

Then, in the mid-2000s, China began its move, hungry for Latin America’s vast resources of raw materials, energy and other commodities. China arrived offering big loans, albeit with strings attached.

The confusion and disarray over the 2022 Summit of the Americas is also fueling discussion about whether such meetings continue to be useful to those who participate. Some experts have said an event gathering together a large and disparate collection of countries for whom only general geography is shared is no longer workable. Others have suggested a U.S. president should meet with smaller groups of the region’s leaders to discuss shared interests.

“My sense is there is a role for summitry ... but we need to think strategically rather than geographically,” Farnsworth said.

In addition, the design of the conference — which is attended by countries with populations ranging from huge to very small — makes it difficult to achieve any sort of unified action on regional issues. In fact, the last five summits have failed to produce a joint declaration, the usual crowning coda of such events. U.S. officials say they hope to produce a Los Angeles declaration on immigration this year.

“Nothing gets achieved through the formal mechanisms of the summit,” said Dan Restrepo, a former special assistant to President Obama who coordinated his participation in two Summits of the Americas.

	<p>“That’s how dysfunctional the summit system itself is. But you can do things at the summit that can be useful in that it’s an action-forcing event.”</p> <p>Another concern among many who follow Latin American affairs is whether the U.S. will sustain focus and interest in the region after the summit, or simply hold the event and move on.</p> <p>At best, some say, the Biden administration should counter the sense that the U.S. is disengaged.</p> <p>“This should not be a one-and-done,” Rebecca Bill Chavez, a former Pentagon official and now president of the Inter-American Dialogue, said Friday in a video conference. “But a launching pad.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Biggest price increases in Seattle
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/with-inflation-at-near-40-year-high-heres-what-has-seen-the-biggest-price-increases-in-seattle/
GIST	<p>Even before inflation became front-page news, Seattle already had among the highest costs of living in the U.S. But now, with inflation at a near 40-year high, some of the price increases in Seattle are eye-popping. And while housing and gas prices might be the most obvious examples, there are consumer goods that have increased even more.</p> <p>To get a complete picture, I turned to the just released Cost of Living Index for the city of Seattle, which covers the first quarter of 2022. Typically, the Cost of Living Index, or COLI, is used to compare U.S. cities with one another. But I used it to compare Seattle with itself to see how much prices have changed in one year.</p> <p>So, how much more are we paying for food, gas and other goods and services than we were one year ago?</p> <p>Of the 59 items surveyed by COLI researchers in Seattle, 44 were more expensive than they were one year before. And 21 of them increased more than 10%.</p> <p>U.S. consumers have been struggling with high inflation rates for months. In April, prices were up 8.3% from one year earlier, just below the 8.5% year-over-year surge in March, which was the highest since 1981.</p> <p>The jump in gasoline prices hits drivers hard every time they need to fill the tank, and it grabs the most media attention. In Seattle, the one-year increase was more than \$1 per gallon, from about \$3.21 in the beginning of 2021 to \$4.26 in the first quarter of 2022.</p> <p>That’s a 33% jump, but it only ranked as the third-highest price increase among the 59 survey items. Two supermarket items topped the list.</p> <p>Margarine, of all things, increased the most, up 47% (or 49 cents) from one year ago. A 5-pound bag of potatoes had the second-largest price increase, up 39% (or \$1.25).</p> <p>Sharp price increases were felt across the board, covering a wide range of goods and services. The typical men’s haircut costs around \$37 in Seattle, up 16%. An annual veterinary checkup for a pet dog went up 30%, costing almost \$82. The price per pound of rib-eye steak jumped 13% to more than \$19. These are just a few examples of the 21 items with double-digit increases.</p> <p>But there were 15 items in Seattle that went down in price over the past year, although most of the decreases were tiny. The biggest price drop was for an auto repair service — the cost to have a vehicle’s tires balanced is 16% lower than last year, at around \$60.</p> <p>The Cost of Living Index is published by the Arlington, Virginia-based Council for Community and Economic Research, a nonprofit research and policy organization. COLI researchers collect their data</p>

during the same three-day period each quarter. For the first quarter of 2022, surveys were conducted in 262 cities across the U.S.

For a city the size of Seattle, COLI researchers collect as many as 10 sample prices for each item, when possible. Taxes are not included in the price.

Seattle ranked as having the ninth-highest overall cost of living in the new COLI release. Compared with the average cost of living for all 262 cities surveyed, it cost about 51% more to live in Seattle. The most expensive place in the nation was Manhattan, at 141% above average, followed by Honolulu and San Francisco.

When compared with the other cities surveyed, the most expensive thing in Seattle was — no surprise — housing. The estimated price for a roughly 2,400-square-foot new construction home (\$892,500) was 134% higher than the 262-city median. The estimated rent for a roughly 950-square-foot, two-bedroom apartment (\$2,789 per month) was also 134% higher than the median. Both home prices and rents in Seattle are up close to 8% from one year ago.

For almost all of the 59 items surveyed, prices in Seattle were higher than the 262-city median. There were two exceptions. A half gallon of whole milk was on par with the median, at \$2.22. And the mortgage interest rate for a 30-year fixed-rate home loan was less than 0.1% below the median, at 3.6%.

Seattle is one of nine places in Washington surveyed in the first-quarter 2022 COLI, and it was the most expensive. But most other places in Washington, particularly on the western side of the state, also had overall higher costs of living than the index average.

Kitsap County and Mount Vernon/Skagit County were both 21% higher than average, followed by Bellingham (+19%), Olympia (+13%) and Spokane (+2%).

The Tri-Cities area (Kennewick-Richland-Pasco) and Wenatchee were both less than 1% above average.

And the cheapest place to live among the nine surveyed in Washington?

With a cost of living around 2% below the national average, Yakima.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Ukraine war deepens China mistrust West
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/ukraine-war-deepens-chinas-mistrust-of-the-west
GIST	<p>More than 100 days into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's strategic assessment of the conflict is becoming clearer: it does not wish to be cast in the same light as Russia, but the war has deepened Beijing's mistrust of the west.</p> <p>In Beijing's view, the pessimism has been exacerbated by the US and its allies' recent efforts, for example, to help Taiwan increase its international recognition. On Monday last week, Beijing made the second-largest incursion into Taiwan's air defence zone this year with Taipei reporting 30 jets entering the area, including more than 20 fighters.</p> <p>China's tone has also evolved from sitting on the fence to outright defensive. When the conflict first began in late February, Beijing tried to be "impartial", but in the last few weeks, it deployed the language that directly confronted the US-led Nato and western sanctions, calling them "financial terrorism" and "economic weaponisation".</p> <p>"The war in Ukraine has intensified the confrontation between the US and China," said Prof Yan Xuetong, director of the institute of international studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing, in a recent talk. "It [also] further highlighted the differences between us [China] and France, Germany, Britain and Japan."</p>

Yan also detected that the emerging bipolarisation in the new world order was not tilting in China's favour. And his view was widely shared by Chinese scholars and public intellectuals, said Liu Yawei, senior adviser on China at the Atlanta-based Carter Centre.

China's leadership has sensed it, too. Early in May, [the Guardian reported](#) that shortly after the invasion began, Beijing had ordered a comprehensive "stress test" to study the implications of a possible Russia-style sanctioning by the west. Several key government agencies – from banking regulation to international trade – have been asked to come up with responses if the west imposed the same embargos on [China](#).

Domestically, debates over Ukraine have endured, in spite of censorship. "China not only cannot stand with Putin, but also should take concrete actions to prevent Putin's possible adventures," [warned Hu Wei](#), vice-chairman of the Public Policy Research Center of the Counselor's Office of the State Council in Beijing in March, in rare dissent against the official view. But the article was quickly taken down.

While Beijing's relationship with Moscow continues to evolve, despite their friendly public pledges such as "'no limits' partnership", in a strategically anxious China today, voices such as Hu's are often met with fierce criticism.

Zhao Tong, a Beijing-based senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, observed: "Liberal voices within China have become less capable to counterbalance against the growing influence of hardline views that see China's future as resting with working with other like-minded countries to more proactively push back against the US-led western order, norms, and values."

One of the reasons for this dynamic, according to Liu, was that opponents saw "strong evidence that even if China had supported the US in condemning [Russia](#) and sanctioning it, the fundamentals in the bilateral relationship would not change". He pointed out that many saw last week's speech by Antony Blinken, in which the secretary of state said Washington would "shape the strategic environment around Beijing", as further evidence that the American state has determined to treat China as its ultimate challenger.

And until recent weeks, public opinion seemed to be on Beijing's side, too. According to [a poll](#) by the Carter Centre's US-China Perception Monitor initiative, 75% of Chinese respondents agreed that supporting Russia was in China's national interest, although roughly 60% of the surveyed also expected China to play a role in mediating an end to the war.

The public's overwhelming support for Beijing's stance – which some called "pro-Russian neutrality" – has made an immediate change of course more difficult, even if senior officials were thinking about a possible adjustment at some point, Zhao said.

The perception gap in Beijing is stark to many westerners. There is also a growing view among hawks that the conflict is a "proxy war" between Russia and the western powers. Additionally, Beijing thinks the US would ultimately glean the benefits from Ukraine's misfortune – an assumption that has been heightened by the collapse of mutual trust in recent years.

"Russia-Ukraine conflict is Putin's 'counter-strike' against the US-led west's plan to dismember Russia," declared Qiu Wenping of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, a government thinktank, repeating Moscow's talking points in a recent TV discussion. "China is in a position that is somewhat comparable to Russia's ... The US is clearly manipulating the Taiwan issue and constantly fanning the flames in order to dismember China by creating a Ukraine of the Orient."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Rise in partisan attacks in Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/ukrainian-partisan-attacks-surge-russia

Ukrainian partisans in occupied areas of the country are increasing attacks and sabotage efforts on Russian forces and their local collaborators, with organised underground efforts appearing to spread.

Six Russian border guarders were reportedly killed last week when their position came under fire near the Zernovo border checkpoint in Ukraine's north. Two days later an explosion struck close to the office of Yevgeny Balitsky, a pro-Kremlin Ukrainian official in Melitopol.

The increase in partisan warfare, particularly in the country's south around Kherson, follows warnings at the outset of Russia's war against Ukraine that any area under occupation was likely to see the emergence of guerrilla warfare.

The subject is one of the murkiest of the war in Ukraine. Both sides have an interest in exaggerating its prevalence: the Russians to justify crackdowns in areas they occupy and the Ukrainians to demoralise Russian troops.

Also complicating the issue is assessing the extent to which attacks are being carried out by Ukrainian military sabotage groups or homegrown resistance groups.

Partisans are usually defined as members of an armed group formed to fight secretly against an occupying force, for instance in Nazi-occupied [Europe](#). The term holds more positive connotations than insurgent.

The Melitopol incident, involving a car packed full of explosives, was significant enough to focus renewed attention on a phenomenon that has been occurring since almost the beginning of the war.

Some analysts believe they are seeing evidence that partisan activity in Ukraine is escalating. Among them is Alexander Motyl, a historian and Ukraine expert at Rutgers University.

Writing for [the defence-focused website 1945](#) last week, Motyl noted: "I gathered the data from Ukrainian websites that explicitly identified the perpetrators of these actions as partisans.

"It is, of course, possible that Ukrainian special forces may have been involved in some of these actions; it is also likely that the data are incomplete, inasmuch as some actions probably went unreported.

"Even so, the number of guerrilla actions is impressive and bespeaks a trend toward ever-greater partisan activity."

Commenting on the Melitopol explosion, pro-Kremlin authorities in the city explicitly blamed Ukrainian partisans. Russia's Investigative Committee blamed it on "Ukrainian saboteurs".

The attack in Melitopol came just days after a reported assassination attempt on Andriy Shevchyk, a pro-Kremlin and self-proclaimed mayor of Enerhodar, in the Zaporizhzhia region, who was badly injured in an explosion.

In other incidents, railway lines in Russian-occupied areas have been damaged while leaflets have circulated threatening Russian troops and collaborators.

The Institute for the Study of War, a US thinktank, suggested that Russian authorities in Luhansk oblast – which has been the scene of the heaviest recent fighting – were gearing up for an increase in partisan attacks in the area.

"Russian authorities are likely anticipating Ukrainian partisan pressure in Luhansk," it suggested in its 1 June update on the fighting.

"The Main Ukrainian Intelligence Directorate (GUR) announced on 1 June the launch of the "Luhansk partisan" project to galvanize resistance to Russian attempts to consolidate control of Luhansk oblast.

“A Russian Telegram channel reported that the Russian Internal Ministry is sending a special detachment of its employees on “leave” to the [self-styled separatist] Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR), which is a likely attempt to reinforce Russian administrative presence in the LNR in the face of growing internal and partisan discontent.”

Some of the claimed incidents in recent months involving partisans are probably fanciful disinformation, in the same vein as the nonexistent fighter pilot ace “the Ghost of Kyiv” – who it turned out was a carefully constructed fiction.

While claims Russian soldiers fed poisoned pies are impossible to verify, there have been credible reports of collaborators and Russian soldiers killed or disappeared. Some claims suggest the number of soldiers killed by partisans so far could be in the low hundreds.

What is clear is that the plan for partisan warfare was long and well prepared.

Ukrainian partisan forces started being trained after Russia’s intervention in 2014 but they became part of Ukraine’s state structures last summer, according to Serhii Kuzan, head of the Ukrainian Center for Security and Cooperation, a Ukrainian thinktank that specialises in military analysis.

Partisan forces, along with Ukraine’s territorial army, were part of new self-defence measures introduced across the country, said Kuzan.

While thousands had joined the territorial army, hundreds had also volunteered to be trained as Ukrainian partisans, said Kuzan. Both forces are made up of people from a given region.

The Ukrainian partisan forces were trained to be an underground resistance movement in the event their region became occupied, said Kuzan. Their task is to build networks of informants, launch information campaigns against the occupiers, pass information back to the Ukrainian authorities, and to kill high-level political collaborators and the occupying commanders, said Kuzan.

Ukrainian partisans were led and trained by Ukrainian special forces, who were responsible for carrying out the higher-level acts of subversion, said Kuzan.

“The idea is for the occupier to always feel the presence of the partisans and for them never to feel safe,” said Kuzan. “Recently, the partisan forces in Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions carried out a coordinated sticker and flyer campaign against the so-called Russian world.”

As Ukrainian partisan fighters are legally part of Ukraine’s defence forces, the Ukrainian state is obliged to look after them. The families of most of the partisans were evacuated from areas that could be occupied before or just after the invasion, said Kuzan.

Ukrainian partisans operated only in occupied Ukraine and did not stray across borders because that would be seen as a pretence for escalation by Russia, said Kuzan.

But it’s clear that some subversive activity is being carried out on the other side of the border. As well as the claimed attack on the border guards, Russian oil storage facilities, railway lines, and Russian ministry of defence buildings, near the Ukrainian border, appear to have been targeted since the war started in February.

“We all understand that oil depots and military bases in Russia have been blowing up over the last few months,” said Kuzan. “But the Ukrainian official response is ‘someone was smoking in the wrong place and they must have done it themselves’. They joke about it and make it clear that it’s no one’s business.”

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SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/european-unity-on-ukraine-growing-more-difficult-says-estonian-pm
GIST	<p>European unity over the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine is proving difficult to maintain in the face of the war's impact on inflation and living standards across the continent, Estonia's prime minister has said.</p> <p>Kaja Kallas also criticised the French president, Emmanuel Macron, for trying to provide Vladimir Putin with a diplomatic way out of the conflict, saying the only effect was to give the Russian leader the belief that he will not be isolated or face justice for his army's war crimes.</p> <p>"We are at a point when sanctions start to hurt our side," said Kallas, who has gained a growing reputation for standing up to Putin. "At first the sanctions were only difficult for Russia but now we are coming to a point when the sanctions are painful for our own countries, and now the question is how much pain are we willing to endure. It is different for different countries. The unity is very hard to keep. It is getting more and more difficult because of high inflation, and energy prices."</p> <p>She added: "Gas might be expensive, but freedom is priceless. People living in the free world do not really understand that."</p> <p>She said that as a teenager she had been liberated from a Russian totalitarian prison – Estonia was annexed by the USSR until 1991. "I know what it feels like and this is the experience of central and eastern countries," she said. "But this is an experience that some western European countries do not have, so the values might go out of the window as soon as you feel the pain on your side."</p> <p>Estonia has the highest inflation in the EU, and Kallas's coalition government collapsed last Friday leading her to scramble to form a new government in alliance with social democrats.</p> <p>Kallas criticised Macron for talking to Putin, whom she accused of committing war crimes. She said: "I do not see any point in talking to him if we want to get the message through that he is isolated and the message that he will not escape unpunished for this and will be held accountable for all the crimes committed," she said.</p> <p>"I am very worried by the premature calls for a ceasefire or peace, since a ceasefire does not mean the atrocities will end in the occupied territories. We have already made this mistake three times, in Georgia, Donbas and Crimea, and we cannot make this mistake again."</p> <p>She said by the end of the Soviet occupation of Estonia the proportion of Russians in the population had risen from 2% to 30%, and she feared the same fate in Russian-occupied Ukraine.</p> <p>Macron recently repeated his view that Putin must not be humiliated, underlining the divisions between those who say Putin must be defeated and be seen to be defeated, and those who say simply he must not win.</p> <p>Kallas said: "Putin can well save his face by going back to Russia because his forces are in a sovereign country."</p> <p>Kallas, in London to see Boris Johnson and other UK ministers, said that if her plans to form a new coalition failed, her government was likely to be replaced by another coalition that includes rightwing extremists who sympathise with Russia, oppose Ukrainian refugees and still do not recognise that Joe Biden was elected as US president legitimately.</p> <p>Kallas felt forced to collapse her coalition with the Centre party last Friday after weeks of rows over preschool education and welfare benefits, leaving the Centre party to look for allies on the far right to try to form a majority government. She said the far right in Estonia "use the same speaking points as Vladimir Putin, opposing Ukrainian refugees and claiming this is all war hysteria".</p>

	<p>She said the far right had never recognised Biden’s election because they were supporters of Donald Trump.</p> <p>The Centre party is trying to form a government in conjunction with the small centre-right Isamaa party and the far-right EKRE Conservative People’s party of Estonia, reproducing a coalition that was in office from April 2019 to January 2021.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 DOD: PFAS water supply 12 military bases
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/06/military-bases-contaminating-water-supply-pfas
GIST	<p>Dangerous levels of toxic PFAS are contaminating water supplies in areas around at least 12 military bases, new Department of Defense testing has revealed, drawing concern from public health advocates that the DoD is not doing enough to protect the public.</p> <p>The data released this week by the military shows levels for five kinds of PFAS compounds at what Scott Faber, vice-president of government affairs for Environmental Working Group, characterized as “extremely high” levels, and he said they present a health threat to residents living nearby.</p> <p>“You can only hope now that people know and are finding alternative sources of water because those are shockingly high levels of PFAS,” he added.</p> <p>PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a class of about 9,000 chemicals used across dozens of industries to make products resistant to water, stains and heat. Though the compounds are highly effective, they are also linked to cancer, kidney disease, birth defects, decreased immunity, liver problems and a range of other serious diseases.</p> <p>They are called “forever chemicals” due to their longevity in the environment.</p> <p>The military’s firefighters use aqueous film-forming foam, or AFFF, which contains extremely high levels of PFAS, in training exercises and emergencies. Though AFFF is effective, it has led to widespread contamination around bases and airports, and Congress just mandated the military check for PFAS pollution at 700 facilities while earmarking \$571m for cleanup, though observers say the cost will likely be much higher.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act mandates that the defense department phase out AFFF and use safer alternatives already on the market.</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set an advisory health standard of 70 ppt for PFOS and PFOA, two types of PFAS used in the foam, though that may soon be lowered, and some states have already set much lower standards.</p> <p>Levels of PFOS in groundwater around Whidbey Island NAS near Seattle in the Puget Sound topped 4,700 ppt, while eight sites exceeded the EPA’s advisory levels. Meanwhile, levels for three other PFAS compounds that the department tested for topped 1,150 ppt, and though no federal standard for those compounds exists, many exceeded limits some states have set.</p> <p>In a statement, the DoD said it has since 2016 provided bottled water and filtration systems or connected residences to municipal water lines in locations where it has found PFAS contamination.</p> <p>“DoD continues to perform routine sampling at impacted locations off-base and expand sampling to further investigate and identify locations where there is known or potential risk of PFAS release,” a spokesperson said.</p> <p>But Faber said the military has known about the threat for decades, and “they are only alerting neighbors because Congress ordered them to do so”.</p>

	"In the absence of a Congressional order, they would continue to be a bad neighbor," he said.
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HEADLINE	06/06 UK: 77 more monkeypox cases, total 302
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/uk-records-77-more-cases-of-monkeypox-taking-total-to-302
GIST	<p>The current outbreak of monkeypox in the UK has topped 300 cases, official figures reveal, as contacts who have a rash with blisters are asked to contact a sexual health clinic.</p> <p>According to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), 77 more cases of monkeypox have been confirmed in the UK, 73 of which are in England and two each in Scotland and Wales. The figures bring the total identified in the UK, as of 5 June, to 302, with 287 in England, 10 in Scotland, two in Northern Ireland and three in Wales.</p> <p>Typically found in central and west Africa, monkeypox has cropped up in recent months in myriad countries where it is not endemic, including the UK, Australia, France, Canada and Israel.</p> <p>While it appears the current outbreak involves the west Africa strain of the virus, which is less serious than the Congo strain, the situation has caused concern given both the number of cases involved, and evidence of community spread.</p> <p>The UKHSA reiterated that, at present, "most cases have been in men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with men", although the agency stressed that anyone could catch monkeypox, particularly if they have close contact with a symptomatic person.</p> <p>Last month the United Nations' Aids agency raised concerns that the LGBTI community could experience stigma as a result of some of the media portrayals of cases that it has called "racist and homophobic".</p> <p>Most people shrug off the virus after a few weeks, but monkeypox can pose a greater risk to pregnant people, children and those with weakened immune systems.</p> <p>Among the symptoms of monkeypox are fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes and a rash with blisters. The UKHSA reiterated on Monday that anyone who has developed such a rash and has either returned from west or central Africa or been a close contact of a confirmed or suspected monkeypox case in the past three weeks should contact a sexual health clinic.</p> <p>However, experts, while concerned, have stressed that the risk for the general public remains low.</p> <p>"This is not a disease the general public should be worried about," said Dr Sylvie Briand, the WHO's epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention chief, on 28 May. "It is not Covid or other diseases that spread fast."</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 UN agencies warn looming food crises
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/climate-shocks-fueling-multiple-looming-food-crises-85217633
GIST	<p>ROME -- Two U.N. food agencies issued stark warnings Monday about multiple, looming food crises on the planet, driven by climate "shocks" like drought and worsened by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine that have sent fuel and food prices soaring.</p> <p>The glum assessment came in a report by two Rome-based food agencies: the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).</p> <p>WFP Executive Director David Beasley said besides hurting "the poorest of the poor" the global food crises threaten to overwhelm millions of families who are just getting by.</p>

“Conditions now are much worse than during the Arab Spring in 2011 and 2007-2008 food price crisis, when 48 countries were rocked by political unrest, riots and protests,” Beasley said in a statement. He cited as “just the tip of the iceberg” food crises now in Indonesia, Pakistan, Peru and Sri Lanka.

The report calls for urgent humanitarian action to help “hunger hotspots” where acute hunger is expected to worsen over the next few months.

The U.N. agencies are also warning that war in Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia in February, has exacerbated already steadily rising food and energy prices worldwide.

“The effects are expected to be particularly acute where economic instability and spiraling prices combine with drops in food production due to climate shocks such as recurrent droughts or flooding,” the joint statement from the U.N. agencies said.

Among critical areas cited is East Africa, where the United Nations said an “unprecedented” drought is afflicting Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. South Sudan, meanwhile, faces a fourth straight year of large-scale flooding.

The report cited other sobering climate impacts: above-average rain and a risk of localized flooding in the Sahel, a vast swath of Africa stretching south of the Sahara Desert.

It also cited a more intense hurricane season in the Caribbean and below-average rainfall in Afghanistan. That Asian country is already suffering through multiple seasons of drought, violence and political upheaval, including after the return of Taliban rule last summer.

The report tagged six nations as “highest alert” hot spots facing catastrophic conditions: Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Somalia. It said as many as 750,000 people are facing starvation and death in those countries. Of those, 400,000 are in Ethiopia’s embattled Tigray region — the highest number on record in any one country since the 2011 famine in Somalia, the U.N. agencies said.

In April, according to a study by regional health officials that was seen by The Associated Press, at least 1,900 children under 5 died from malnutrition in the Tigray region. Western Tigray, which is under the control of forces from the neighboring Amhara region, was not included in that survey.

The U.N. food agencies report Monday said Congo, Haiti, the Sahel region, Sudan and Syria remain “of very high concern” and noted that Kenya was a new entry to that list.

Joining the list of hot spot countries were Sri Lanka, Benin, Cape Verde, Guinea, Ukraine and Zimbabwe, while areas that faced continuing food scarcities included Angola, Lebanon, Madagascar and Mozambique.

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HEADLINE	06/07 Russia returning bodies from steel mill
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ap-exclusive-russia-begins-returning-bodies-steel-mill-85226366
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine -- Dozens of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks have been returned to Ukraine by the Russian occupiers of the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol, where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow’s invasion.</p> <p>The dead taken from the ruins of the bombed-out mill were transferred to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, where DNA testing is underway to identify the remains, according to both a military leader and a spokeswoman for the Azov Regiment.</p> <p>The Azov Regiment was among the Ukrainian units that defended the steelworks for nearly three months before surrendering in May under relentless Russian attacks from the ground, sea and air.</p>

It was unclear how many bodies might remain at the plant.

Meanwhile, Russian forces continued to fight for control of Sievierodonetsk, an eastern Ukrainian city that is key to Moscow's goal of completing the capture of the industrial Donbas region.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces were holding their positions in the city amid fierce fighting in the streets as Russia tries to deploy more forces.

"But it is the 103rd day, and the Ukrainian Donbas stands. It stands firmly," he said in his nightly address to the nation.

"Russia's broader plan likely continues to be to cut off the Sievierodonetsk area from both the north and the south," the U.K. Ministry of Defense said in an assessment Tuesday.

But it noted that Russian progress to the south has "stalled" over the past week as Moscow's forces prepare to make a fresh push in the north.

Zelenskyy also said Moscow's forces intend to take the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, home to more than 700,000 people, a move that could severely weaken Ukraine's standing and allow the Russian military to advance closer to the center of the country.

"In the Zaporizhzhia region ... there is the most threatening situation there," Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian fighters' dogged defense of the steel mill frustrated the Kremlin's objective of quickly capturing Mariupol and tied down Russian forces in the strategic port city.

The defenders' fate in Russian hands is shrouded in uncertainty. Zelenskyy said more than 2,500 fighters from the plant are being held prisoner, and Ukraine is working to win their release.

The recovery of remains from the Azovstal ruins has not been announced by the Ukrainian government, and Russian officials have not commented. But relatives of soldiers killed at the plant discussed the process with The Associated Press.

Ukraine on Saturday announced the first officially confirmed swap of its military dead since the war began. It said the two sides exchanged 320 bodies in all, each getting back 160 sets of remains. The swap took place Thursday on the front line in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Anna Holovko, a spokeswoman for the Azov Regiment, said all 160 of the Ukrainian bodies turned over by the Russians were from the Azovstal ruins. She said that at least 52 of those bodies are thought to be the remains of Azov Regiment soldiers.

Maksym Zhorin, a former Azov Regiment leader now co-commanding a Kyiv-based military unit, confirmed that bodies from the steel plant were among those exchanged.

The brother of an Azov fighter missing and feared dead in the steelworks told the AP that at least two trucks of bodies from Azovstal were transferred to a military hospital in Kyiv for identification.

Viacheslav Drofa said the remains of his elder brother, Dmitry Lisen, did not appear to be among those recovered so far. He added that some of the dead were severely burned.

The mother of a soldier killed in an airstrike on the plant said the Azov Regiment telephoned her and said her son's body might be among those transferred to Kyiv. The mother did not want her or her son to be identified by name, saying she feared that discussing the recovery process might disrupt it.

She tearfully referred to her son as a hero. "It's important for me to bury him in our Ukrainian land," she said.

In other developments Monday, Ukraine's efforts to fight off Russia's invasion loomed large over D-Day commemorations in France, where the 78th anniversary of the Normandy invasion was marked.

"The fight in Ukraine is about honoring these veterans of World War II," Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at the American Cemetery of Colleville-sur-Mer, overlooking Omaha Beach in Normandy.

He added: "It's about maintaining the so-called global rules-based international order that was established by the dead who are buried here at this cemetery."

Meanwhile, the president of Ukraine's separatist Donetsk People's Republic said that the pro-Moscow region is putting on trial three British men alleged to have been mercenaries for Ukraine. If convicted on the charges, including of trying to seize power, the men could get the death penalty.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree granting lump-sum payments of 5 million rubles (\$81,000) to families of Russian National Guard members who die in Ukraine. Guard members have taken part in such operations as the seizure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The lump sum is roughly six times the average annual Russian salary.

On the battlefield, Russian warplanes fired long-range missiles to destroy a plant on the edge of the town of Lozova in the northeastern Kharkiv region that was repairing armored vehicles, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said.

Russian aircraft hit 73 areas of concentration of Ukrainian troops and equipment, while Russian artillery struck 431 military targets, Konashenkov said. His claims could not be independently verified.

Ukrainian forces put up resistance in Sievierodonetsk and other areas.

"There are more of them, they are more powerful, but we have every chance to fight on this direction," Zelenskyy said.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Migrant caravan southern Mexico sets out
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/migrant-caravan-sets-southern-mexico-85211778
GIST	<p>TAPACHULA, Mexico -- Several thousand migrants set out walking in the rain early Monday in southern Mexico, tired of waiting to normalize their status in a region with little work and still far from their ultimate goal of reaching the United States.</p> <p>Their advocates said they wanted to call attention to their plight, timing it with this week's Summit of the America's in Los Angeles. It was estimated to include 4,000 to 5,000 migrants, mostly from Central America, Venezuela and Cuba.</p> <p>It is the largest migrant caravan to attempt to leave southern Mexico this year, though a much larger group was stopped last year in Guatemala. Mexican authorities have eventually broken up the others through a mix of force and offers to more quickly resolve their cases.</p> <p>Many carried children in their arms, on their backs, using sheets of plastic or blankets to shield them from the persistent rain. They walked from the southern city of Tapachula to a town about 10 miles (15 kilometers) away before stopping to rest for the night.</p>

For months, migrants and asylum seekers have complained that Mexico's strategy of containing them in the southernmost reaches of the country has made their lives miserable. Many carry significant debts for their migration and there are few opportunities for work in Mexico's south.

The migrants complain that delays in paperwork on visa requests have trapped them in Tapachula, a city near the Guatemalan border. On Monday, a group of migrants tried to escape a detention center in Tapachula, climbing onto one of the roofs of the facility. However, police and National Guard ringed the center and prevented any escape.

Mexico's asylum agency has been overwhelmed by the surging number of applicants. Restrictive policies have made applying for asylum in Mexico one of the few routes migrants have to legalize their status and be able to continue traveling north.

The caravan departed just hours before Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced that he would not be attending the Summit of the Americas because the Biden administration did not invite Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua to participate.

Luis García Villagrán, an activist accompanying the migrants in Tapachula, said they wanted to send a message to the region's leaders that "the migrant women and children, the migrant families are not bargaining chips for ideological and political interests."

Venezuelan migrant Ruben Medina said he and 12 members of his family found themselves in southern Mexico because of his country's president Nicolás Maduro.

"(We have) been waiting about two months for the visa and still nothing, so better to start walking in this march," Medina said.

"They gave us an appointment for August 10 in (the asylum commission), and we don't have the money to wait," said Joselyn Ponce of Nicaragua. "We had to walk around hiding from immigration, there were raids, because if they catch us they will lock us up."

The phenomenon of migrant caravans took off in 2018. Previously, smaller annual caravans moved through Mexico to highlight migrants' plight, but without the stated goal of reaching the U.S. border.

But then several thousand migrants began walking together, betting on safety in numbers and a greater likelihood that government officials would not try to stop them. It worked at first, but more recently the Guatemalan and Mexican governments have been far more aggressive in moving to dissolve the caravans before they can build momentum.

An October 2021 caravan grew to about 4,000 migrants before it diminished in southern Mexico. Another that was broken up by authorities in Guatemala in January of that year was estimated to be even larger.

While the caravans have garnered media attention, the migrants traveling in them represent a tiny fraction of the migratory flow that carries people to the U.S. border every day, usually with the help of smugglers.

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HEADLINE	06/06 US 'forceful response' if NKorea tests nuke
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-official-vows-forceful-response-korea-tests-nuke-85227816
GIST	<p>SEOUL, South Korea -- U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Tuesday warned of a forceful response if North Korea carries out its first nuclear test explosion in nearly five years as she traveled to Seoul to meet with South Korean and Japanese allies and discuss the escalating standoff.</p> <p>U.S. and South Korean officials have said North Korea is all but ready to conduct another detonation at its nuclear testing ground in the northeastern town of Punggye-ri, which last hosted a test in September 2017,</p>

when it claimed to have detonated a thermonuclear bomb designed for its intercontinental ballistic missiles.

While the Biden administration has vowed to push for additional international sanctions if North Korea goes on with the nuclear test, the prospects for meaningful new punitive measures are unclear with the United Nations Security Council divided over Russia's war on Ukraine.

"Any nuclear test would be in complete violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. There would be a swift and forceful response to such a test," Sherman said, following a meeting with South Korea Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong.

"We continue to urge Pyongyang to cease its destabilizing and provocative activities and choose the path of diplomacy," she said.

Sherman and Cho are planning a trilateral meeting with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo on Wednesday over the North Korean nuclear issue. Sherman's trip to Asia came after North Korea fired a salvo of eight ballistic missiles into the sea Sunday, possibly setting a new high in single-day launches, extending a provocative streak in weapons tests this year that also included the country's first demonstrations of ICBMs since 2017.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un could further escalate his brinkmanship by conducting what would be the country's seventh nuclear test since 2006. Experts say North Korea could use a test claim an ability to build small nuclear bombs that could be clustered on a multiwarhead ICBM or fit on Kim's expanding range of short-range, solid-fuel missiles that pose an increasing threat to South Korea and Japan.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Monday there are indications that one of the passages at the Punggye-ri testing ground has been reopened, possibly in preparations for a nuclear test.

Hours before Sherman's meeting in Seoul, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in Washington that the United States remains concerned that North Korea could seek its seventh test "in the coming days."

The Biden administration's punitive action over North Korea's weapons tests in recent months have been limited to largely symbolic unilateral sanctions. Russia and China had vetoed a U.S.-sponsored resolution that would have imposed additional sanctions on North Korea over its previous ballistic tests on May 25.

"We have called on members of the international community, certainly members of the UN Security Council's permanent five, to be responsible stakeholders in the U.N. Security Council as a preeminent forum for addressing threats to international peace and security," Price said.

"Unilateral actions are never going to be the most attractive or even the most effective response, and that is especially the case because we are gratified that we have close allies in the form of Japan and the ROK," he said, referring to South Korea's formal name, the Republic of Korea.

North Korean state media have yet to comment on Sunday's launches. They came after the U.S. aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan concluded a three-day naval drill with South Korea in the Philippine Sea on Saturday, apparently their first joint drill involving a carrier since November 2017, as the countries move to upgrade their defense exercises in the face of North Korean threats.

North Korea has long condemned the allies' combined military exercises as invasion rehearsals and often countered with its own missile drills, including short-range launches in 2016 and 2017 that simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean ports and U.S. military facilities in Japan.

Following the latest North Korean launches, the United States conducted separate joint missile drills with Japan and South Korea, which they said were aimed at displaying their response capability.

	<p>Nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang have stalled since 2019 over disagreements in exchanging the release of crippling U.S.-led sanctions for the North's disarmament steps.</p> <p>Despite facing harsh challenges at home, including a decaying economy and a COVID-19 outbreak, Kim has shown no willingness to fully surrender an arsenal he sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.</p> <p>His government has so far rejected the Biden administration's offers for open-ended talks and is clearly intent on converting the dormant denuclearization negotiations into a mutual arms-reduction process, experts say.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Sacramento schools reinstate masks
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/sacramento-city-unified-school-district-reimposes-mask-mandate/story?id=85210972
GIST	<p>The Sacramento City Unified School District reinstated its mask mandate Monday just two months after making face coverings optional.</p> <p>School officials said the decision came after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designated the county as having high levels of COVID-19 in the community.</p> <p>When counties enter this category, the federal health agency recommends masking in indoor, public spaces and on public transportation.</p> <p>"Sacramento is a community that has been devastated due to COVID," SCUSD Superintendent Jorge Aguilar told ABC News. "Our district has been really committed in the overall safety of our students and staff ... so we established the CDC threshold would be the drivers for our decision-making."</p> <p>According to the CDC, the county is currently recording 283.49 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people every week.</p> <p>Data from the district shows the case rate is currently more than seven times higher than when the mask mandate was lifted.</p> <p>Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious diseases specialist at the University of California, San Francisco, told ABC News that cases in Northern California are rising for several reasons, the main being the spread of new omicron subvariants.</p> <p>"The new generations of subvariants are looking so different from the original variants from Wuhan that the antibodies don't recognize them as easily," he said.</p> <p>He described immunity from vaccination against the new subvariants as two levels of defense.</p> <p>"I think of the antibodies as guards at the front gate that are a little bit sleepy that let the virus in," Chin-Hong said. "But you have B-cells and T-cells so, once the virus is in, they're like the guard dog that attacks. So, you get infected, but you won't go to the hospital."</p> <p>SCUSD's decision comes as several school districts have reimposed mask mandates amid increasing COVID-19 cases in recent weeks.</p> <p>These include Philadelphia; Brookline, Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island, as well as universities such as the University of Delaware and the University of Hawaii.</p> <p>"I know that April to June is not a very long time and people were just getting used to" not having a mask mandate, Aguilar said. "I do recognize that this is a very divisive topic but we've been very fortunate that</p>

	<p>the vast majority of our community has stood firm and in support of the kinds of measures that we've put in place."</p> <p>Chin-Hong said SCUSD's decision to reimpose mask mandates is an example of what health officials mean when they discuss ramping up mitigation measures when cases rise and easing them when cases fall.</p> <p>"This is a good example of what turning on and off the switch of protection looks like," he said. "I think we'll have to get used to it to keep hospitals intact and keep people healthy."</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle downtown tourism bounces back
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/crowds-return-to-seattle-in-levels-not-seen-since-the-pandemic
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - The crowds are returning downtown in levels not seen since the pandemic. A count of foot traffic and visits from late May shows that hundreds of thousands made their way to the downtown Seattle area daily.</p> <p>"There seems to be a lot of people out and about," said Chad Bloxham. "It's nice to have corners where you are standing, and you are having basically a traffic jam on the corner trying to cross rather than being a ghost town."</p> <p>The Bloxham's were visiting the waterfront Sunday. They had come to Seattle for the Luke Combs concert at Lumen Field this weekend.</p> <p>"It was sold out, a sold out concert. It poured, but it was beautiful," said Jen Bloxham.</p> <p>"It was the craziest thing I've seen so far as of how much it was pouring and how much fun people were having," said Chad.</p> <p>Kristy Faulkner and Carrie Grummons flew in from California and Connecticut for the New Kids on the Block Concert.</p> <p>"I felt like I was fourteen again, screaming," said Kristy.</p> <p>"It was really nice," said Carrie.</p> <p>The two were planning to go to the Oyster House before flying out later Sunday night.</p> <p>We also caught up with a Texas family, enjoying the rain and waterfront before their cruise to Alaska.</p> <p>"Its very cool here, and back home, it's like extremely hot. I really like the cool weather," said Misty Dvorak.</p> <p>"The weather is great, Texas is hot," said Danny Dvorak.</p> <p>"We are liking it. We are liking the shops and the food," said Diana Dvorak.</p> <p>James Sido, with the Downtown Seattle Association, says foot traffic and visits to the city are increasing.</p> <p>"We had in terms of total visitors, the highest numbers that we've seen since before the pandemic," said Sido</p> <p>Starting at around May 23, the DSA said a 7-day count showed that total visits, including workers, residents and visitors combined, averaged more than 380,000 per day. That's more than 2.6 million total over the 7-day period. The daily average is the highest counted since the start of the pandemic.</p>

	<p>"We are not even to summer yet. We are not near the peak tourism season. To have those kinds of numbers before that period hits is really encouraging," said Sido. "It is a combination of workers, residents, domestic visitors. All of those groups taken into consideration, having those numbers so high, speaks to a confidence downtown and people enjoying being in the city," said Sido.</p> <p>"We are thrilled to have tourists back in Seattle," said Karen Locke, an Employee of Argosy Cruises. "We are really glad to still be here. We've been here 70 years, and we hope for 70 more."</p> <p>Locke says the increasing number of visitors is welcome news following the pandemic.</p> <p>"Business is so much better than last year because we finally have the people back. We finally have Seattle re-opening. We finally have people wanting to be here. It's really made us feel a lot better about our company and the area," said Locke.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 China secret PLA naval facility Cambodia
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/06/06/cambodia-china-navy-base-ream/
GIST	<p>China is secretly building a naval facility in Cambodia for the exclusive use of its military, with both countries denying that is the case and taking extraordinary measures to conceal the operation, Western officials said.</p> <p>The military presence will be on the northern portion of Cambodia's Ream Naval Base on the Gulf of Thailand, which is slated to be the site of a groundbreaking ceremony this week, according to the officials, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.</p> <p>The establishment of a Chinese naval base in Cambodia – only its second such overseas outpost and its first in the strategically significant Indo-Pacific region – is part of Beijing's strategy to build a network of military facilities around the world in support of its aspirations to become a true global power, the officials said.</p> <p>China's only other foreign military base right now is a naval facility in the East African country of Djibouti. Having a facility capable of hosting large naval vessels to the west of the South China Sea would be an important element of China's ambition to expand its influence in the region and would strengthen its presence near key Southeast Asian sea lanes, officials and analysts said.</p> <p>"We assess that the Indo-Pacific is an important piece for China's leaders, who see the Indo-Pacific as China's rightful and historic sphere of influence," one Western official said. "They view China's rise there as part of a global trend toward a multipolar world where major powers more forcefully assert their interests in their perceived sphere of influence."</p> <p>Beijing, the official said, is banking on the region being "unwilling or unable to challenge China's core interests," and through a combination of coercion, punishment and inducements in the diplomatic, economic and military realms, believes it can get countries to bend to its interests. "Essentially, China wants to become so powerful that the region will give in to China's leadership rather than face the consequences [for not doing so]," the official said.</p> <p>The Wall Street Journal reported in 2019 that China had signed a secret agreement to allow its military to use the base, citing U.S. and allied officials familiar with the matter. Beijing and Phnom Penh denied the report, with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen denouncing it as "fake news." A Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman at the time also denounced what it called "rumors" and said China had merely been helping with military training and logistical equipment.</p> <p>Over the weekend, however, a Chinese official in Beijing confirmed to The Washington Post that "a portion of the base" will be used by "the Chinese military." The official denied it was for "exclusive" use</p>

by the military, saying that scientists would also use the facility. The official added that the Chinese are not involved in any activities on the Cambodian portion of the base.

The official said the groundbreaking, scheduled for Thursday, was taking place and that Chinese officials would attend. The Chinese ambassador to Cambodia is expected to be present.

Asked for comment, the Cambodian Embassy in Washington said in a statement that it “strongly disagrees with the content and meaning of the report as it is a baseless accusation motivated to negatively frame Cambodia’s image.” It added that Cambodia “firmly adheres” to the nation’s constitution, which does not permit foreign military bases or presence on Cambodian soil. “The renovation of the base serves solely to strengthen the Cambodian naval capacities to protect its maritime integrity and combat maritime crimes including illegal fishing,” the statement said.

China’s Foreign Affairs Ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

The Western officials said they expect there will be an acknowledgment at the ceremony of Chinese involvement in financing and construction of the expansion of Ream Naval Base, but not of plans for its use by the People’s Liberation Army. The expansion plans were finalized in 2020, and, significantly, called for the Chinese military to have “exclusive use of the northern portion of the base, while their presence would remain concealed,” a second official said.

The two governments have taken pains to mask the presence of the Chinese military at Ream, the official said. For instance, foreign delegations visiting the base are permitted access only to preapproved locations. During these visits, Chinese military personnel at the base wear uniforms similar to their Cambodian counterparts’ or no uniform at all to avoid suspicion from outside observers, the official said. When Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman visited the base during a trip to the region last year, her movements were “very heavily circumscribed,” the official said.

While she was in Cambodia, Sherman sought clarification over Cambodia’s razing in 2020 of two U.S.-funded facilities on Ream Naval Base, according to a State Department news release. The demolition took place after Cambodia declined a U.S. offer to pay to renovate one of them, according to a Pentagon report on Chinese military developments last year. That move, the report said, “suggests that Cambodia may have instead accepted assistance from the [People’s Republic of China] to develop the base.”

“What we’ve seen is over time is a very clear and consistent pattern of trying to obfuscate and hide both the end goal as well as the extent of Chinese military involvement,” the second official said. “The key thing here is the [PLA’s] exclusive use of the facility and having a unilateral military base in another country.”

Last year, the “Joint Vietnamese Friendship” building, a facility built by the Vietnamese, was relocated off Ream Naval Base to avert conflicts with Chinese military personnel, the officials said. China and Vietnam have long had a tense relationship, with Hanoi and Beijing clashing over competing territorial claims in the South China Sea for half a century.

The secrecy around the base appears to be driven primarily by Cambodian sensitivities and concern about a domestic backlash, the second official said. There is strong domestic opposition to the idea of a foreign military base, said the official, noting the constitutional ban on the presence of foreign military in the country. As the chair of the 10-member regional Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, Cambodia is keen to avoid the perception it is, as the second official said, “a pawn” of Beijing.

Cambodia has been walking a fine line between accommodating and distancing itself from Beijing. It was an “enthusiastic supporter” of the U.S.-ASEAN special summit in Washington last month, the second official said. In March, it joined 140 other countries in voting at the U.N. General Assembly to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Beijing abstained from the vote and has publicly affirmed a “no limits” partnership with Moscow that includes opposing further NATO enlargement. At the same time, Chinese

influence in Cambodia has grown rapidly in recent years, with China providing substantial aid and investment, a trend that has also caused some concern in Phnom Penh about overreliance on Beijing.

Beyond its base in Djibouti, opened in 2017, Beijing is pursuing military facilities to support “naval, air, ground, cyber, and space power projection,” the Pentagon report said. It has “likely considered a number of countries,” it said, listing more than a dozen, including Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and the United Arab Emirates. A global network could “both interfere with U.S. military operations and support offensive operations against the United States,” the report said.

The report also said that Chinese military academics have asserted that such bases can enable deployment of military forces in theater, and intelligence monitoring of the U.S. military.

The Chinese official told The Post that ground station technology for a BeiDou navigation satellite system was located at the Chinese portion of Ream Naval Base. BeiDou is China’s homegrown alternative to the U.S. Space Force-managed Global Positioning System, and has military uses including missile guidance. The official did not have direct knowledge of how this system was being used.

China’s military uses BeiDou’s high-accuracy positioning and navigation services to facilitate force movements and precision-guided munitions delivery, according to a March report by the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency.

China’s global basing effort is “not just about power projection but about global tracking and space assets,” said a third Western official. Cambodia’s Ream is “one of their most ambitious efforts to date.”

China’s navy is already the world’s largest by numbers of vessels. The U.S. Navy has 297 battle-force ships – carriers, destroyers, submarines, etc. – according to the Congressional Research Service, while China has 355 and is projected to have 460 by 2030, according to last year’s Pentagon report.

But, said Andrew Erickson, research director of the China Maritime Studies Institute at the Naval War College, “as impressive as those numbers are, without a significant network of robust overseas facilities, their ability to use them falls off rapidly with distance from China.”

China is nowhere close to matching the network of military bases the United States has around the world, a major U.S. military and strategic advantage, said Richard Fontaine, chief executive of the Center for a New American Security. But, he said, a base in Cambodia “gives them a force-projection capability that they would otherwise not have in the region. That’s intrinsic to the Chinese aspiration of having a more dominant military presence throughout the Asian rimland and in the South China Sea, allowing Beijing to hold at risk – and have political influence over – countries quite far from the Chinese shore.”

Djibouti was a logical first step for a military outpost in that it is in a region far from China in which Beijing wants to have a presence, in this case to secure its growing Middle Eastern energy interests, Erickson said. Also, the United States, France and Japan have long had military bases there, he noted. “The question then becomes, how do you start filling out the board?”

Cambodia is “a no-brainer” in that Hun Sen, prime minister since 1985, is “extremely amenable,” Erickson said, noting that the Cambodian leader has had a long strategic partnership with Beijing.

“But the problem is Cambodia is a small country in a tough spot,” he said. “It’s trying to have it both ways: maximum strategic collaboration with China with minimum regional pushback. That contradiction is going to be exposed by the undeniable development of this facility.”

China also has reportedly sought to establish a facility in the UAE. Last year, U.S. intelligence agencies learned that Beijing was secretly building a military installation at a port in near the Emirati capital of Abu Dhabi, the Wall Street Journal reported. After meetings and visits by U.S. officials, construction was halted, the Journal reported. The current status of the project is unclear.

China's secret building of a Cambodian base "resembles the playbook" it used in reclaiming and militarizing the Spratly Islands in the disputed South China Sea beginning in 2015, said Eric Sayers, a former adviser to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command who is now a nonresident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. "It started quietly," he said, "with Beijing claiming its building of artificial islands on coral reefs and atolls was for peaceful purposes and promising the features would not be militarized. Then when it was far too late, we saw permanent and irreversible militarization."

He said he expected to see the trend also play out in the Solomon Islands, a South Pacific nation that recently signed a security agreement with China. In April, after a draft copy of the agreement was leaked on social media, Beijing confirmed the pact, which neither government has released. According to the leaked copy, China will be permitted to send armed police and military personnel to the Solomon Islands to help maintain order. The government there has denied it would lead to China establishing a military base.

But Western officials are skeptical. "There's evidence that China is developing plans and has sent technical teams to the Solomons to explore possibilities for basing facilities that would contradict some of the assurances that the government has made to allied governments," a third Western official said.

The Solomons agreement is part of a broader Chinese effort – not always successful – to build influence in the region. Last week, China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, completed a 10-day tour of the South Pacific but failed to achieve a desired 11-nation pact on security and development. Instead of repeating the Solomons diplomatic coup, China's proposal was shelved at a meeting in Fiji, after some countries questioned whether the deal would spark greater confrontation between China and rivals in the region.

But it would be a mistake to take the rebuff of Wang as a sign that Beijing's influence is waning, the third official said. "There is a relentless quality to what the Chinese are involved in and they're just going to keep coming. So anyone who thinks this is a signal that they've been blunted or blocked, that's not accurate."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Nursing homes face closure: staff shortages
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/u-s-nursing-homes-face-closure-risks-from-staffing-shortages/
GIST	<p><i>Bloomberg</i> - Almost three quarters of nursing homes say they're at risk of closing due to staff shortages, with more than half operating at a loss, according to a survey. If things don't improve, most fear that resources won't be enough to keep them in business for more than a year.</p> <p>Expenses are 41% higher than a year ago, and more than half of those polled said finding workers is even more difficult this year, according to a study from the American Health Care Association released Monday. The staff shortfalls are forcing homes to turn away potential residents at a time when occupancy rates are already far lower than before the pandemic.</p> <p>The survey of 759 facilities last month shows pressures aren't easing in the beleaguered sector. AHCA, an industry lobbying group, has said more than 400 facilities are at risk of closing this year as homes grapple with lower enrollment and higher labor and supply costs.</p> <p>"We are at a critical juncture in the senior housing industry," with more support needed from the federal and state governments, said Suzanne Koenig, a nursing home turnaround expert and head of SAK Management Services.</p> <p>The industry has attracted more scrutiny after COVID-19 swept through facilities, killing more than 150,000 residents. The White House has proposed regulation to enhance quality and lower turnover, including minimum staffing requirements.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle demand Uber, Lyft still not back
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/seattle-area-demand-for-uber-lyft-still-not-back-up-to-speed-an-outlier-in-the-u-s/
GIST	<p>It used to be that Mohamed Gahayr could earn close to \$200 in four or five hours of driving for Uber and Lyft. The turnaround between dropping one person at the airport and picking another up was almost immediate. Some days, he'd have to turn off the app to catch a few minutes for lunch or a break.</p> <p>Gahayr hasn't seen days like that in two years, as the market for ride-hailing services in Seattle and King County has struggled to return. To earn the same money today, he works almost twice the hours, often forgoing days off. He never closes the app anymore and even at the airport finds himself waiting 20 or 30 minutes in the parking lot.</p> <p>"It's time that you're supposed to be with your family," he said. "Time that you're supposed to be doing the things you love."</p> <p>If it feels to Gahayr and his fellow Seattle-area drivers like the passengers haven't returned, it's because they haven't. In the first quarter of 2022, drivers for Uber and Lyft provided around 3.3 million rides in King County, according to data provided by the Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services through a public records request. That's just 36% of the companies' combined 2019 peak of 9.3 million rides.</p> <p>Trips have rebounded some from the depths of the pandemic, when the region saw only 1.3 million rides in the second quarter of 2020. But for most of 2021 and into 2022, trips have plateaued.</p> <p>"I think it's pretty clear that rides have not recovered to their pre-pandemic level," said Beth Gappert, division director of consumer protection at FAS. "We're up a little bit, but they've been pretty steady for a period of time."</p> <p>The anemic numbers tell a story about the halting return to normalcy for a metropolitan area defined in large part by the tech industry. The companies also contend that new minimum wage requirements in Seattle are depressing ridership, a claim disputed by others.</p> <p>Many drivers in King County and elsewhere in Washington appear to have stopped working for Uber and Lyft altogether, a nationwide issue for the companies that threatens to fray their coverage. In 2021, King County issued 12,285 ride-hailing permits to drivers, according to the King County Records and Licensing Services Division. In 2019, that number was roughly 80,000; in 2018, it was nearly 90,000.</p> <p>Those who remain are competing for fewer passengers. Takele Gobena, a SeaTac city council member and field organizer on behalf of drivers, said he hears from drivers that tech workers, who used to be their most consistent and lucrative passengers, are still absent.</p> <p>"Those are the workers that take long trips into downtown Seattle," he said. "We hear from drivers who've been in the business five years, eight years, 10 years. They know where they pick up people and drop people off. It's like, 'Oh, we're missing tech workers.'"</p> <p>At the same time, the number of active taxicabs in King County was down to 351 at the end of 2021 from 1,108 in 2018 — a 68% drop that began in 2019, before the pandemic, and has accelerated since the first shutdowns of 2020, according to King County's Records and Licensing Services Division.</p> <p>Both Uber and Lyft tend to be protective of ridership specifics; in Washington, it took the state Supreme Court to say their Seattle-based data is not exempt from the state's public records act.</p> <p>A spokesperson for Lyft declined to explain how Seattle's ridership compared to other locations, saying the company does not disclose "market specifics." A spokesperson for Uber, however, said "the low trip numbers in Seattle are far outside the norm."</p>

“Overall the city is experiencing one of the slowest rebounds in the country,” said the spokesperson.

The slow rebound threatens to hurt the companies’ promise of on-demand rides, delivered quickly.

“One of the things we know is that systems like this work better when you have a thicker market, when you have higher density of demand,” said Don MacKenzie, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Washington and head of its Sustainable Transportation Lab. “That enables you to have more supply in the system and more supply in the system means shorter waiting times.”

Where did the drivers go?

Gahayr stopped driving in the early days of the pandemic. He lived on savings until he became eligible for COVID-era unemployment assistance, which was extended to gig workers.

It was a common tale: Between April 2020 and September 2021, 7,640 drivers received emergency assistance from the state, said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, regional labor economist with the Washington Employment Security Department. Many didn’t return to driving: While the state finds it difficult to track gig workers, Vance-Sherman said 1,180 of them later showed up in a more traditional job classification, leaving behind the gig life to earn wages as an employee rather than an independent contractor.

“If you were a ... driver because you love the flexibility, then you’re still doing it,” said Vance-Sherman. “If it’s something that was earning you a wage and it ends up being a risky job for you, financially or healthwise, you’ve got more opportunities as a job seeker than you’ve ever had.”

“A lot of drivers that had to stop driving at the beginning of the pandemic, a good chunk of them haven’t come back in Seattle,” said Michael Wolfe, executive director of Drive Forward, an industry-funded drivers’ group, “and the ones who have, we’re hearing reports from them that they’re taking fewer rides.”

Other drivers picked up work delivering food, through Uber Eats or DoorDash, said Kerry Harwin, communications director for Drivers Union, a local labor-backed drivers’ group. It may not have been enough to recoup all of their lost income, but with Seattle’s new minimum wage — which guarantees drivers \$1.38 per mile, 59 cents per minute and a per-trip minimum of \$5.17 — it could come close.

Gahayr, who lives in Tukwila and works to support his 2-year-old son, couldn’t make food delivery pencil out. Besides, he hated running around apartment buildings looking for whoever ordered a coffee. Earning less income was never an option. The trade-off, then, is longer hours.

Seattle lags behind

Uber and Lyft face headwinds. The stock prices of both have plummeted as investors pull back and the companies grapple with supply and demand. Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi [warned](#) of a tighter period ahead for the company in a memo to staff. Lyft also [forecast](#) slowed hiring and budget cuts for the company.

At the same time, gas prices have cut into driver margins. The companies have added a surcharge, increasing the cost of trips, which are [as high as they’ve ever been](#).

The issues facing the two companies appear to be distilled in Seattle. MacKenzie of the UW said he was surprised that Seattle trip numbers are as low as they are, but pointed out that the city has been among the most cautious when it comes to COVID restrictions.

“I wonder how many people are still either avoiding Uber and Lyft because it’s a shared vehicle space, or simply they’re avoiding the places that they would commonly go when using Uber and Lyft,” he said.

Wolfe, of Drive Forward, echoed the argument from the companies, that Seattle’s new minimum wage for drivers has further depressed ridership.

	<p>“If the rest of the county is closer to 70% [of pre-pandemic ridership] but Seattle’s at 45, the only difference is Fare Share,” the name of the Seattle minimum wage law, he said.</p> <p>MacKenzie said that’s a possible explanation but couldn’t say definitively Fare Share was to blame. Ridership on King County Metro buses correlates closely to the number of trips with Uber and Lyft; boardings in April 2022 were around 50% of boardings in April 2019.</p> <p>Harwin said the minimum wage will be a net benefit, because driver earnings are buoyed by law.</p> <p>“There’s more resiliency because drivers are able to make more than what they used to,” he said. Gahayr recently started school to pursue a career in technical engineering, but put his education on pause as he spent more time on the road.</p> <p>Lately, he’s considered finding a salaried job, maybe in the world of affordable housing. But he hasn’t put in any applications yet. “I haven’t fixed my résumé,” he said. “Like I said, I can’t find the time because I have to always drive.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle-area housing market cooling down
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/here-are-three-signs-the-seattle-area-housing-market-is-cooling/
GIST	<p>Where local homebuyers once found bidding wars, all-cash offers and record-breaking price increases they’re now finding something closer to “normal.”</p> <p>Buyers and sellers made fewer deals last month than at this time a year ago, according to data released Monday by the Northwest Multiple Listing Service. Sellers are dropping prices, buyers are finding a bit of room for negotiation and prices appear to be leveling off.</p> <p>After nearly two years of frenzy, “I feel like the market is correcting itself,” said Debbie Barbara, a Redfin agent based on the Eastside.</p> <p>Here are three takeaways.</p> <p>Homes aren’t flying off the market as quickly More new single-family houses and town homes hit the market for sale throughout the month of May, welcome news for buyers who’ve struggled with scarce inventory.</p> <p>But more houses were still on the market at the end of the month, too. That’s a sign that buyers are moving slowly or shelving their searches altogether.</p> <p>In King County, 73% more homes were listed at the end of May than at the same time last year. In Pierce County 74% more and in Kitsap 43%. In Snohomish, more than twice as many listings were still active at the end of the month.</p> <p>Likewise, a measure comparing the current supply of homes to the demand, known as “months of inventory,” estimates it would take three to four weeks to sell through the available homes across all four counties. At this time last year, it would have taken about two weeks or less.</p> <p>“Yes, the marketplace is slower than what it’s been,” said Snohomish-based RE/MAX broker Zach Hensrude. “But where we’ve been is really at historical speed where folks are making decisions in 15 minutes to buy a house.”</p> <p>Fewer buyers are taking the plunge The number of pending sales — meaning the buyer and seller have agreed to the deal, but it hasn’t yet closed — dipped across much of the region last month compared with a year ago.</p>

The declines ranged from about 7% in Pierce County to 18% in King County. Kitsap County was an outlier: Pending sales there were up 9%.

The same is true for condos: About 16% fewer King County condos went pending in May.

Some buyers struggle to afford rising interest rates and [higher mortgage payments](#). Others are holding off because of uncertainty.

In a region dominated by tech companies that offer their employees stock options, homebuyers who hoped to tap into those stocks to help buy a house might be unsettled by recent [dives in the stock market](#).

“They are not able to get some loans that they wanted to using those stocks,” Barbara said. “People who thought they could buy a million-plus home can’t.”

And with more homes and less buyer interest come price drops.

Hensrude cited a recently remodeled two-story, four-bedroom home in South Everett that hit the market at \$900,000. After just one to two showings per week and sparsely attended open houses, the sellers dropped the price to \$860,000 last month. They received one offer and accepted it, Hensrude said.

What’s more, the buyer included contingencies such as the ability to get an inspection of the house and sell their own home first. Those types of buyer protections have been rare in the super-hot sellers’ market of 2020 and 2021.

Barbara recently represented sellers who, after some back and forth with buyers, accepted an offer of about \$50,000 below the list price for their five-bedroom home in Sammamish.

“The fact that we negotiated — that’s just something I haven’t had to do in a very long time,” she said.

Prices are leveling off

What does all of this mean for home prices?

We’re still finding out. Data about home prices reflects closed sales, which typically took place about a month earlier. So, the numbers lag behind the other indicators.

Median home prices were basically flat across the Puget Sound region from April to May.

In King County, the median home sold for \$998,888. Median home prices hit \$815,000 in Snohomish, \$582,000 in Pierce and \$554,550 in Kitsap.

Median prices are up by double-digit percentages compared to last year, but those increases are getting less dramatic.

Since the start of the year, home prices are up about 29% in King County, 14% in Snohomish, 11% in Pierce and 9% in Kitsap. In all but King County, those are smaller January-May increases than last year.

Home shoppers will be relieved to say goodbye (for now) to the cutthroat competition of the last two years. But prices in the region will remain out of reach for plenty of people.

Before the pandemic, Anthony Miller saved aggressively to gather what he expected he would need to buy a house: a 20% down payment for a \$400,000 home. He lived with his dad, meal prepped and avoided unnecessary expenses.

But reality hit when he started shopping and putting offers on houses. As he looked around the Bonney Lake area, the types of houses he once expected to be in the running for “had gone up \$100,000,” he said.

	<p>Miller, 35, worried about accepting a higher monthly mortgage payment or high homeowners association fees for a condo.</p> <p>“I went to work and saved my money,” said Miller, who works as a biomedical technician at a hospital. “But even with that, it seems like I don’t have enough money still.”</p> <p>He plans to wait another year or so before trying again.</p> <p>“Realistically,” he said, “unless prices start going down, I don’t see myself buying a house anytime soon.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 ‘Unlawful harassment’ by Pierce Co. sheriff
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/court-issues-no-contact-order-against-sheriff-ed-troyer-citing-unlawful-harassment-of-black-newspaper-carrier/
GIST	<p>A Pierce County judge Monday issued an anti-harassment order against Pierce County Sheriff Ed Troyer, requiring him to stay 1,000 feet from a Black newspaper carrier for one year, citing continued incidents of “unlawful harassment.”</p> <p>The ruling came in a virtual hearing on whether to extend a temporary anti-harassment order that had been filed last month by an attorney for Sedrick Altheimer, the newspaper carrier who is suing Troyer and Pierce County over a highly publicized confrontation on Jan. 27, 2021.</p> <p>In issuing the ruling Monday, Pierce County District Court Pro Tem Judge Christine Chin cited “a course of conduct of unlawful harassment,” referring to multiple incidents in recent months in which Altheimer said Troyer followed him in his unmarked SUV, circling around and flashing his lights as he delivered newspapers in Tacoma.</p> <p>“Considering the power that an individual like Sheriff Troyer holds, the anxiety and the harassment ... is going to have an impact on someone like Mr. Altheimer,” said Chin, who referred to Troyer creating an “intended effect” by “trolling the neighborhood” and tailing Altheimer late at night.</p> <p>Appearing with his attorney, Vonda Sargent, Altheimer testified under oath Monday about the encounters, saying he was left fearful by the continued contacts with Pierce County’s top law enforcement officer. He tearfully said he was giving up his newspaper delivery job because “I don’t feel safe any more.”</p> <p>Troyer did not initially show up for the hearing, but he was summoned by the judge. His attorney, John Sheeran, said Troyer would not be offering any testimony because of criminal charges pending against him.</p> <p>Sheeran disputed Altheimer’s claims of harassment, saying at the hearing that Troyer had encountered him only once since the January 2021 incident — while checking on his 84-year-old father, to whom Altheimer delivered a newspaper in April.</p> <p>“It is unfortunate that today the pro tem judge decided to take the word of a person highly motivated by a pending civil lawsuit over a public servant with 37 years of dedicated service protecting the people of Pierce County,” Sheeran said in an emailed statement after the judge’s order. “Sheriff Troyer will continue to serve the public as he was elected to do. He looks forward to a jury vindicating him.”</p> <p>Troyer has faced criticism and calls for his resignation over his early morning Jan. 27, 2021 encounter with Altheimer, who was delivering newspapers on his regular route. Saying he believed Altheimer was acting suspiciously, Troyer tailed him in his personal, unmarked SUV, not identifying himself as law enforcement.</p>

The two wound up in a standoff in a quiet West Tacoma intersection, and Troyer called in [a massive police response](#), repeatedly telling an emergency dispatcher that Altheimer had [threatened to kill him](#). Troyer backed off his threat claims upon questioning [by Tacoma police](#).

In October, Troyer [was charged](#) with criminal misdemeanor counts of false reporting and making a false or misleading statement to a public servant over the incident. He has pleaded not guilty and called the charges brought by the state Attorney General's Office "a politically motivated anti-cop hit job."

A trial in that case was originally set for July but has been pushed to October.

Attorneys representing Altheimer filed a legal claim against Pierce County last June seeking at least \$5 million in damages. A federal civil lawsuit seeking such damages is on hold pending the outcome of the criminal case.

Separately, an investigation commissioned by the Pierce County Council, conducted by former U.S. Attorney Brian Moran, found [Troyer's conduct had violated policies](#) on bias-free policing and other professional standards.

Troyer in October also was placed on Pierce County's "Brady list" — a roster of law enforcement officers with credibility problems that could impact their ability to serve as witnesses in criminal cases.

The new anti-harassment order takes the place of a temporary one filed last month, which required Troyer to stay 500 feet from Altheimer. In a petition filed last month in support of the anti-harassment order, Altheimer wrote that Troyer had "repeatedly driven by me" in the most-recent encounter at around 3 a.m. on the morning of May 14. That was in addition to similar encounters in April and one last November, he wrote.

"I am a young black man and I know I will not be given the benefit of the doubt if Sheriff Troyer is able to convince other officers that I am a threat to his safety," Altheimer wrote. "I fear that he is setting me up for a scenario for him to either kill me or have me arrested."

In his statement on behalf of Troyer on Monday, Sheeran stated that Troyer "has no desire to have any contact with Mr. Altheimer whatsoever."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Oregon DMV temporarily closes 10% offices
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/northwest/oregon-dmv-temporarily-shutters-10-of-field-offices/
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles says it is temporarily closing 10% of its field offices for the next three months because it doesn't have enough employees to keep them open.</p> <p>The agency is grappling with a staffing shortage, OPB reports.</p> <p>To ensure more predictable service, the DMV plans to transfer workers to higher-demand locations, even if that means shutting some less-frequented offices entirely in the short term.</p> <p>The six offices that will close this summer are in Lebanon, Redmond, Stayton, Sandy, Ashland and Cave Junction.</p> <p>Another 10 field offices will have reduced hours: Astoria, Canyonville, downtown Portland, Heppner, Hermiston, Junction City, Klamath Falls, Lake Oswego, Lincoln City and Milton-Freewater.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Rise Covid hospitalizations; health burden
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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/amid-a-covid-surge-wa-hospital-leaders-wonder-why-fewer-people-seem-to-care/
GIST	<p>A wave of infections since mid-March has meant a steady increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations. But during this surge, fewer people seem to be talking about it.</p> <p>And that has hospital officials showing some frustration as they fear Washingtonians might not fully understand the burden on public health.</p> <p>Yes, most people are not getting as sick as they were during past peaks, Cassie Sauer, president of the Washington State Hospital Association, said in a Monday news briefing. And doctors and scientists have a better understanding of the disease now, as well as better access to antiviral drugs. Vaccination rates are also higher and new variants have, so far, been less severe.</p> <p>That doesn't mean people aren't dying from COVID or suffering from long-term symptoms, hospital leaders said.</p> <p>"It's all the same stuff we've been doing all along. ... And yet the community's not feeling that at this point," said Dr. David Carlson, chief physician officer at Tacoma-based MultiCare. "I don't have a magic understanding of why that is other than there is just this enormous amount of fatigue, and COVID is not continually the story on the news today."</p> <p>Dr. Chris Baliga, infectious disease specialist at Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, added that people should not be surprised when they test positive for the virus now.</p> <p>"[Washingtonians] are just not as aware of it as perhaps they could be," he said.</p> <p>Fortunately, Sauer said, current infection and hospitalization levels are still lower than they were during the state's last omicron surge. At the end of last week, health care systems counted about 600 COVID patients in hospitals across the state — an increase of about 10% from the previous week, though nowhere near the peak of 1,700 COVID hospitalizations in a given week in early February, she said.</p> <p>The state is seeing less than one death a day, but several per week. About 20 to 25 COVID patients are on ventilators per day, compared to 100-plus in January.</p> <p>At the end of last month, however, the state Department of Health recorded about 265 infections per 100,000 people, up from about 40 per 100,000 in mid-March and likely an undercount.</p> <p>Last week, King County public health officer Dr. Jeff Duchin said on Twitter, "It's likely we'll continue to experience intermittent surges (with) increases in cases & lesser increases in hospitalizations & deaths for many months."</p> <p>Hospitalizations could be slowing in some parts of the state, including in Clark, King and Snohomish counties, said Dr. Steve Mitchell, medical director of Harborview Medical Center's emergency department. He added, though, that those rates are still rising in Pierce, Skagit, Spokane and Benton counties.</p> <p>Mitchell also leads the Washington Medical Coordination Center, a system established when the pandemic began that serves as a clearinghouse for placing patients around the state when their nearest hospital can't take them. In recent months, requests to the WMCC had been going down, but have doubled in the past few weeks, Mitchell said.</p> <p>"This doubling of requests to our team represents that stress, which is rising in our health care system," he said.</p>

Return to Top	<p>Although DOH reports average hospital capacity is about 91% full, several individual health care systems are overfilled — including MultiCare, which is operating at 120% capacity at all its Puget Sound area locations, according to Carlson.</p> <p>While only a fraction of patients are admitted for COVID — most are in for delayed care and might test positive at the hospital — high community infection levels mean hospital staffers are regularly calling out sick, exacerbating worker shortages, he said.</p> <p>Rising infection and hospitalization rates prompted Washington’s public health officials, including state Secretary of Health Dr. Umair Shah, to renew a push for indoor masking two weeks ago, but they stopped short of announcing new statewide mandates. On Monday, hospital leaders urged people to continue masking inside, staying socially distant and getting vaccinated.</p> <p>Masks have become a “political problem as opposed to a public health problem,” Carlson said. “I think our public health officials need to think through what the most appropriate behaviors are, the things to do, as a mandate as opposed to a suggestion.”</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	06/06 Microsoft seizes 41 domains: phishing use
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/06/microsoft-seizes-41-domains-used-in.html
GIST	<p>Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit (DCU) last week disclosed that it had taken legal proceedings against an Iranian threat actor dubbed Bohrium in connection with a spear-phishing operation.</p> <p>The adversarial collective is said to have targeted entities in tech, transportation, government, and education sectors located in the U.S., Middle East, and India.</p> <p>"Bohrium actors create fake social media profiles, often posing as recruiters," Amy Hogan-Burney of the DCU said in a tweet. "Once personal information was obtained from the victims, Bohrium sent malicious emails with links that ultimately infected their target's computers with malware."</p> <p>According to an ex parte order shared by the tech giant, the goal of the intrusions was to steal and exfiltrate sensitive information, take control over the infected machines, and carry out remote reconnaissance.</p> <p>To halt the malicious activities of Bohrium, Microsoft said it took down 41 ".com," ".info," ".live," ".me," ".net," ".org," and ".xyz" domains that were used as command-and-control infrastructure to facilitate the spear-phishing campaign.</p> <p>The disclosure comes as Microsoft revealed that it identified and disabled malicious OneDrive activity perpetrated by a previously undocumented threat actor codenamed Polonium since February 2022.</p> <p>The incidents, which involved the use of OneDrive as command-and-control, were part of a larger wave of attacks the hacking group launched against over 20 organizations based in Israel and Lebanon.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 EU: 1hr to remove online terrorist content
SOURCE	https://www.politico.eu/article/online-platforms-to-take-down-terrorist-content-under-an-hour-in-the-eu/
GIST	Facebook, Google and Twitter now have an hour to take down flagged terrorist content spreading on their platforms or risk fines of billions of euros.

	<p>Passed in 2021, the EU's terrorist content regulation enters into force Tuesday. It seeks to crack down on terrorist propaganda on social media and viral livestreams of gruesome attacks such as the 2019 Christchurch mosque shootings.</p> <p>Public authorities such as law enforcement, interior ministries and Europol can now require a platform or cloud services to remove specific posts, music, livestreams, photos and videos inciting violence and glorifying terrorist attacks. Promoting terrorist groups and instructions for how to commit an attack will also be forbidden online.</p> <p>Any European Union country, from Hungary to Poland, can tell a company to remove terrorist content across the bloc.</p> <p>Digital companies will have an hour to comply and will have to ensure similar content is not uploaded again. Users will be informed that their content has been deleted and can contest the decision.</p> <p>If tech companies regularly fail to tackle terrorist content, they could face a fine of up to 4 percent of their global revenue.</p> <p>The law has been criticized by digital rights activists who worry that the tight deadline and limited safeguards could stifle free speech.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 Russian media drives online hate
SOURCE	https://www.axios.com/2022/06/07/russian-media-online-hate-extremists-racism
GIST	<p>There is a clear and growing link between Russian propaganda and online far-right extremism globally, according to a new study from researchers at the George Washington University.</p> <p>Why it matters: The findings suggest the influence of Russian media on these communities is organic, which makes it harder to stop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It's almost like a fog of war," said Neil F. Johnson, a physicist who co-authored the report. "It would be so easy if it were organized in some sense. It's unfortunately not that way." <p>Driving the news: The data gives context to recent real-world hate crimes, most notably the mass shooting in Buffalo, N.Y., last month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Our paper establishes a connection of these two worlds: Russian media promoting certain types of narratives around themes like immigration or racism, and a whole ecology of extreme communities online listening to them," Johnson said. • A network of hate groups amplifies exiting narratives about white nationalism in a way that seeps into the mainstream, he noted. Those messages are often first spread on fringe platforms, often encrypted chat apps and gaming networks. <p>How it works: To study the connection between extremist groups online and Russian propaganda, researchers mapped what they call "hate clusters" (online fringe extremist groups) that have posted links to Russian media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They identified 734 extremist groups, and surveyed whether and how often those groups shared links to Russian state media across five social networks, from June 2019 through January 2020. <p>Key takeaways: The findings suggest extremist hate groups that post links to Russian media tend to originate from places with deep racial divides, including North America, Europe, South Africa, Australia, and Nordic regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The common theme is white frustration, which bleeds into 'Who can I blame?' Johnson said. This is why extremist groups online often bleed into one another organically. "They are looking to see whether there are other communities online around the world that also feel the way they do." • Mainstream social networks, like Facebook, may harbor a greater number of extremist groups compared to smaller platforms, but those groups are far less likely to share links to Russian media,

	<p>likely due to stricter content moderation. Less than 1% of the total Russian state links identified were shared on Facebook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate groups on 4chan and Gab, which are both based in the U.S., share almost as many links to Russian state media sources as the Russian social media network VKontakte (VK). <p>The big picture: The findings dispel the notion that Russian influence on domestic extremism happens through coordinated bot campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead, they suggest that even a small number of stories from Russian state media can spread very quickly among a huge ecosystem of interconnected extremist communities. <p>"It turns out that we've all got it wrong," Johnson said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What this study shows is you don't need a huge organized campaign of bots to influence these types of groups and movements," he said, but rather "just a sprinkling" of stories from Russian media to feed a sprawling network of hate communities that will spread the divisive messaging on their own. <p>What's next: Johnson, who has spent years mapping the intersection between extremist communities online, notes that these types of groups are "self policing," and often shift their messaging around certain topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But they continuously take cues from Russian media, or messages derived from Russian media and spread by like-minded groups. • "They're listening, the issue is who they're listening to."
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HEADLINE	06/06 Intel chief: cybersecurity is getting harder
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/us-intel-chief-cybersecurity-is-only-getting-harder/
GIST	<p>San Francisco — Innovation by cyber adversaries and within the commercial spyware sector are among the key aspects making digital security increasingly difficult for the U.S. intelligence community to effectively manage, the nation's spy chief said Monday.</p> <p>"I think cybersecurity is getting harder," Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said during a keynote address at the RSA Conference.</p> <p>The somber assessment comes as the federal government and the private sector remain on a heightened state of alert about online attacks spiraling out of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ever-present threat of digital piracy or assault by China and other malicious actors.</p> <p>Haines admitted that the U.S. has "not figured out how to prevent intrusions of even sophisticated networks... That is a challenge I think that we're going to live with and the reality is we are from an intelligence community perspective."</p> <p>She specifically cited the increased commercial availability of sophisticated offensive tools that "make it harder for us to manage and it makes it easier for other actors to basically obtain tools that then allow them to engage in pretty sophisticated attacks in a variety of ways."</p> <p>In addition to the threats posed by longtime antagonists, such as North Korea and Iran, the spy community is watching transnational criminal organizations expand their operations — especially ransomware attacks.</p> <p>Another aspect of cybersecurity that is proving more challenging is increased tension between intelligence gathering and privacy and civil liberties online, according to Haines.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic is a "perfect example of where so much more data about us in our daily lives" became available via contact tracing and other medical developments. That information could then be used by data brokers, she added.</p>

	<p>The spy master also said the intelligence community has yet to grasp so-called “lessons learned” from Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine with respect to cybersecurity.</p> <p>“We don’t yet know just because the conflict, obviously, continues. There’s still further chapters to be revealed on how this develops,” she told the audience.</p> <p>Haines suggested that one potential takeaway was the boosted information-sharing that occurred late last year in the run-up to the now months-long conflict.</p> <p>“We sort of encountered a fair amount of skepticism among folks” at first, she said.</p> <p>As a result, President Joe Biden urged intelligence officials to “go out and share as much as you possibly can and ensure folks see what it is that you’re seeing.”</p> <p>“We did a lot of sharing in this space with partners and allies, and we learned a lot from them in that process,” Haines said.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 How hackers choose victims
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/06/hacking-scenarios-how-hackers-choose.html
GIST	<p>Enforcing the "double-extortion" technique aka pay-now-or-get-breached emerged as a head-turner last year.</p> <p>May 6th, 2022 is a recent example. <i>The State Department said the Conti strain of ransomware was the most costly in terms of payments made by victims as of January.</i></p> <p>Conti, a ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) program, is one of the most notorious ransomware groups and has been responsible for infecting hundreds of servers with malware to gain corporate data or digital damage systems, essentially spreading misery to individuals and hospitals, businesses, government agencies and more all over the world.</p> <p>So, how different is a ransomware attack like Conti from the infamous "WannaCry" or "NotPetya"? While other Ransomware variants can spread fast and encrypt files within short time frames, Conti ransomware has demonstrated unmatched speed by which it can access victims' systems.</p> <p>Given the recent spate of data breaches, it is extremely challenging for organizations to be able to protect every organization from every hack.</p> <p>Whether running a port scan or cracking default passwords, application vulnerability, phishing emails, or ransomware campaigns, every hacker has different reasons for infiltrating our systems. It is evident why certain individuals and companies are targeted because of their software or hardware weaknesses, while others affected do not have this common Achilles' heel due to planning and barriers put in place.</p> <p>We can bring in support of security experts like Indusface to defend ourselves and pursue an attack-reduction strategy to reduce both the likelihood and impact of becoming the victim of a cyberattack.</p> <p>But what characteristics do companies possess that tend to attract cyberattacks, and why do hackers target them?</p> <p>And if you knew your company was a likely target, would it make sense for you to be wary of the many ways your information could be compromised?</p> <p>What Motivates a Hacker? When hackers hack, they do so for several reasons. We've listed the 4 most common motivations behind the hacking.</p>

1 — It's About Money:

One of the most common motivations for breaking into a system is monetary gain. Many hackers may try to steal your passwords or bank accounts to make money by taking off with your hard-earned cash. Your customer information wouldn't be safe if hackers made off with it as they could use this data in several ways, perhaps by blackmailing you or even selling it on the black market or deep web.

The average cost of a data breach was \$3.86 million in 2004, according to IBM, and that number has since risen to \$4.24 million as of 2021. It's even expected to rise even more in forthcoming years.

2 — Hack + Activism aka Hacktivism

Some people look at hacking to start political and social revolutions, although the majority are interested in expressing their opinions and human rights or creating awareness over certain issues. However, they can target anyone they like - including terrorist organizations, white supremacist groups, or local government representatives.

Hacktivism, also known as 'Anonymous,' normally target terror groups like ISIS or white supremacist organizations, but they have also targeted local government groups. In January 2016, an [attack](#) on the Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan, led to the leak of thousands of documents and records. The organization claimed responsibility with a video promising "justice" for the city's ongoing water crisis that resulted in 12 deaths over time.

Whether it's a single hacker or a simple online gang, the primary weapons of hacktivists include Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) tools and vulnerability scanners- proven to cause financial losses for well-known corporations. Remember when donations to WikiLeaks were halted, and Anonymous rode high on a series of [DDoS attacks](#)?

3 — Insider Threats

Insider threats can come from anywhere, but they are viewed as one of the organizations' greatest cyber security threats. Many threats can come from your employees, vendors, contractors, or a partner, making you feel like you're walking on eggshells.

Someone within your organization is helping a threat become a reality. Now that we think about it, almost all of your employees, vendors, contractors, and partners are technically internal to the organization. One major weakness enterprises have their core systems of protection; the firewalls and anti-virus programs are easily bypassed by whoever has access to these programs at any one time.

So when the next wave of cyberattacks comes, who better than someone you've always trusted with key security access, damage control measures need to be implemented to prevent a repeat of a situation as catastrophic as Sony's hack in 2014 (possibly perpetuated by its own employee).

4 — Revenge Game

If you have an unruly employee looking for a way to get revenge on your company, they will more than likely take the time to think of a good attack, leaving you thinking twice about dismissing them.

If they have access to your system, you can be sure that they will try to find any way possible to use their privileged status to get back at you even after leaving the company. One way of doing this is by accessing databases and accounts that require logins and passwords. In other cases, disgruntled workers might even sell vital information in exchange for money and more favorable job opportunities only to mess with your organization's infrastructure.

5 — Attack Vectors

Cybercriminals are utilizing a wide range of attack vectors so that they can infiltrate your system or take custody of it by using ransomware attacks like IP address spoofing, phishing, email attachments, and hard drive encryption.

a) Phishing

The most common way to spread ransomware is through phishing emails. Hackers send carefully crafted phoney emails to trick a victim into opening an attachment or clicking on a link containing malicious software.

There are lots of different file formats malware can come in. For example, it could be in a PDF, BMP, MOV, or DOC.

Once hackers take control over your company's network, ransomware malware has a good chance of getting into your system, encrypting information, and taking hostage all the data stored on your devices.

b) Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP)

Running over port 3389, RDP is short for Remote Desktop Protocol, allowing IT administrators to remotely access machines and configure them or merely use their resources for various reasons - such as running maintenance.

The hacker begins by running a port scan on machines over the internet that have port 3389 open. 3389 is for SMB, or Server Message Block, which allows for basic file sharing between Windows computers and is often turned on in the early days of internet usage.

Once a hacker has gained access to open machines on port 3389, they often brute-force the password so they can log into them as an administrator. And then, it is a matter of time. Hackers can get into your machine and initiate the encryption operation to lock down your data by purposefully slowing or stopping critical processes.

c) Attacks on Unpatched Software

A weakness in the software is one of the most promising methods of attack deployment in today's environment. In some cases, when software is not fully up to date or patched, attackers can enter networks without having to harvest credentials.

The Closure

Cyber hackers can now do just as much analyzing and evaluating as security teams for their products. They have the same or even more tools to scan any given system, so it's practical to be able to foresee their motivation and profiles.

With hackers becoming more sophisticated, it is on top priority to have proactive cybersecurity mechanisms to maintain the health of your business.

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HEADLINE	06/07 Cyberattack surface 'spiraling out control'
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/cyberattack-surface-out-of-control/
GIST	<p>Global organizations are still beset with cyber visibility and control challenges, with two-fifths (43%) admitting their digital attack surface is out of control as a result, according to new Trend Micro research.</p> <p>The security vendor polled over 6200 IT and business decision-makers to compile its new study, <i>Mapping the digital attack surface: Why global organisations are struggling to manage cyber risk</i>.</p> <p>It revealed that nearly three-quarters (73%) are concerned about the increasing size of their attack surface. Over a third (37%) said it is "constantly evolving and messy," and just half (51%) thought they were able to fully define its extent.</p> <p>These visibility challenges are greatest in cloud environments, although problems persist across the board. The report highlights complex supply chains, tool bloat and home working-driven shadow IT as additional contributory factors.</p> <p>On average, respondents estimated having just 62% visibility of their attack surface.</p>

	<p>The continued practice of manual (24%) and regional (29%) attack surface mapping is also hampering efforts to gain comprehensive insight and eliminate data silos, especially for global organizations – two-thirds (65%) of which admitted the scale of their operations causes additional challenges.</p> <p>“There’s a sense that major investments in IT modernization over the past few years have created a momentum that is increasingly difficult to manage,” the report noted. “Gaining visibility ... is surely the first step towards effectively mitigating risk.”</p> <p>Yet over half (54%) of responding organizations said they don’t believe their method of assessing risk exposure is sophisticated enough. This is borne out by other stats from the report, notably that almost two-fifths (35%) only review or update their risk exposure monthly or less frequently.</p> <p>Last December, the head of MI6, Richard Moore, warned in a rare public speech that “the digital attack surface that criminals, terrorists and hostile states threats seek to exploit against us is growing exponentially.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 Smishing, vishing attempts surged in 2021
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/smishing-and-vishing-2021/
GIST	<p>SMS phishing (smishing) attacks more than doubled year-on-year in 2021 as cyber-criminals looked to exploit human error to compromise devices, according to Proofpoint.</p> <p>The security vendor’s latest annual <i>Human Factor</i> report is based on an analysis of over 2.6 billion email messages, 49 billion URLs, 1.9 billion attachments, 28 million cloud accounts, 1.7 billion mobile messages and many other data points.</p> <p>Proofpoint claimed that the increase in smishing could be down to changing personal habits: as most consumers now use their devices for work, cyber-criminals have spotted a “two-for-one” opportunity. In the UK, over 50% of smishing lures were related to fake delivery notifications, it said.</p> <p>The report also revealed a surge in telephone-based threats, such as tech support scams and vishing attempts to distribute malware to users’ computers or devices.</p> <p>Typically, such attacks start with unsolicited emails purporting to come from legitimate sources and urging the user to call a helpline. That number takes the victim through to a malicious call center.</p> <p>The Proofpoint study also revealed the continued threat to organizations from their supply chains. Over 80% of businesses are attacked by a compromised supplier account each month, it warned, adding that organizations should improve security awareness training around these specific threats.</p> <p>Elsewhere, the report warned of the risk to organizations from attacks targeting privileged users. It found that although they comprise just 10% of users, managers and executives account for nearly half of attacks or “severe risk.”</p> <p>Similarly, departments that deal with sensitive information like human resources (HR) or finance are more likely to be targeted, it claimed.</p> <p>“Knowing where the highest privilege-based risks exist, whether that is individually or departmentally, is a crucial step in defending any organization from attack,” the report noted.</p> <p>“High-privilege users can receive additional training to manage the elevated threat against them. Departments dealing with sensitive or valuable data may benefit from additional layers of security or oversight.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Mandiant hacked by LockBit ransomware?
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/mandiant-no-evidence-we-were-hacked-by-lockbit-ransomware/
GIST	<p>American cybersecurity firm Mandiant is investigating LockBit ransomware gang's claims that they hacked the company's network and stole data.</p> <p>The ransomware group published a new page on its data leak website earlier today, saying that the 356,841 files they allegedly stole from Mandiant will be leaked online.</p> <p>"All available data will be published!" the gang's dark web leak site threatens under a timer showing just under three hours left until the countdown ends.</p> <p>LockBit has yet to reveal what files it claims to have stolen from Mandiant's systems since the file listing on the leak page is empty.</p> <p>However, the page displays a 0-byte file named 'mandiantyellowpress.com.7z' that appears to be related to a mandiantyellowpress[.]com domain (registered today). Visiting this page redirects to the ninjaflex[.]com site.</p> <p>When BleepingComputer reached out for more details on LockBit's claims, the threat intel firm said it hadn't yet found evidence of a breach.</p> <p>"Mandiant is aware of these LockBit-associated claims. At this point, we do not have any evidence to support their claims. We will continue to monitor the situation as it develops," Mark Karayan, Mandiant's Senior Manager for Marketing Communications, told BleepingComputer.</p> <p>These claims come after Mandiant revealed in a report published last week that the Russian Evil Corp cybercrime group has now switched to deploying LockBit ransomware on targets' networks to evade U.S. sanctions.</p> <p>Mandiant announced in March that it entered into a definitive agreement to be acquired by Google in an all-cash transaction valued at roughly \$5.4 billion.</p> <p>The LockBit ransomware gang has been active since September 2019 as a ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) and relaunched as the LockBit 2.0 RaaS in June 2021 after ransomware actors were banned from posting on cybercrime forums [1, 2].</p> <p>Accenture, a Fortune 500 company and one of LockBit's victims, confirmed to BleepingComputer in August 2021 that it was breached after the gang asked for a \$50 million ransom not to leak data stolen from its network.</p> <p>In February, the FBI released a flash alert with technical details and indicators of compromise associated with LockBit ransomware attacks, asking companies targeted by this RaaS' affiliates to urgently report incidents to their local FBI Cyber Squad.</p> <p>As cybersecurity company Sophos reported in April, a LockBit affiliate lurked around the network of a U.S. local government agency for months before deploying the ransomware payload.</p> <p>Update: After LockBit published the files, it looks like this wasn't about files stolen from Mandiant's network but, instead, about the ransomware group trying to distance itself from the Evil Corp cybercrime gang.</p> <p>This was likely prompted by LockBit fearing the lost revenue because their victims will stop paying ransoms as Evil Corp is sanctioned by the U.S. government.</p>

	<p><i>I was very surprised to read the news on Twitter from the yellow press. mandiant.com are not professional. Any scripts and tools for attacks, are publicly available and can be used by any hacker on the planet, most of the attack methods are on the forums, github and google, the fact that someone uses similar tools can not be proof that the attack is done by the same person.</i></p> <p><i>Our group has nothing to do with Evil Corp. We are real underground darknet hackers, we have nothing to do with politics or special services like FSB, FBI and so on.</i></p> <p>"Mandiant has reviewed the data disclosed in the initial LockBit release. Based on the data that has been released, there are no indications that Mandiant data has been disclosed but rather the actor appears to be trying to disprove Mandiant's June 2nd, 2022 research blog on UNC2165 and LockBit," Mandiant's Karayan told BleepingComputer.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Windows zero-day in local govt. phishing
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/windows-zero-day-exploited-in-us-local-govt-phishing-attacks/
GIST	<p>European governments and US local governments were the targets of a phishing campaign using malicious Rich Text Format (RTF) documents designed to exploit a critical Windows zero-day vulnerability known as Follina.</p> <p>BleepingComputer is aware of local governments in at least two US states that were targeted by this phishing campaign.</p> <p>"Proofpoint blocked a suspected state aligned phishing campaign targeting less than 10 Proofpoint customers (European gov & local US gov) attempting to exploit Follina/CVE_2022_30190," security researchers at enterprise security firm Proofpoint revealed.</p> <p>The attackers used salary increase promises to bait employees to open the lure documents, which would deploy a Powershell script as the final payload.</p> <p>This is used to check if the system is a virtual machine, steal information from multiple web browsers, mail clients, and file services, and collect system information that gets exfiltrated to an attacker-controlled server.</p> <p>As BleepingComputer found while checking the final PowerShell payload of this attack, the threat actors are harvesting large amounts of info revealing this campaign's reconnaissance attack nature since the collected data can be used for initial access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browser passwords: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Opera, Yandex, Vivaldi, CentBrowser, Comodo, CheDot, Orbitum, Chromium, Slimjet, Xvast, Kinza, Iridium, CocCoc, and AVAST Browser. • Data from other apps: Mozilla Thunderbird, Netsarang session files, Windows Live Mail contacts, Filezilla passwords, ToDesk configuration file, WeChat, Oray SunLogin RemoteClient, MailMaster, ServU, Putty, FTP123, WinSCP, RAdmin, Microsoft Office, Navicat • Windows information: Computer information, list of usernames, Windows domain information <p>"While Proofpoint suspects this campaign to be by a state aligned actor based on both the extensive recon of the Powershell and tight concentration of targeting, we do not currently attribute it to a numbered TA," the security researchers said.</p> <p>The security flaw exploited in these attacks is tracked as CVE-2022-30190 and was described by Redmond as a Microsoft Windows Support Diagnostic Tool (MSDT) remote code execution bug.</p> <p>CVE-2022-30190 is still unpatched and it affects all Windows versions still receiving security updates (i.e., Windows 7+ and Server 2008+).</p>

	<p>If successfully exploited, this zero-day can be used to execute arbitrary code with the privileges of the calling app to install programs, view, change, delete data, or create new Windows accounts.</p> <p>Proofpoint also revealed last week that the China-linked TA413 hacking group is now exploiting the vulnerability in attacks targeting their favorite target, the international Tibetan community.</p> <p>Security researcher MalwareHunterTeam also spotted malicious documents with Chinese filenames used to deploy password-stealing trojans.</p> <p>However, the first attacks targeting this zero-day were spotted more than a month ago, using sextortion threats and invitations to Sputnik Radio interviews as baits.</p> <p>While Microsoft is yet to release CVE-2022-30190 patches, CISA has urged Windows admins and users to disable the MSDT protocol abused in these attacks after Microsoft reported active exploitation of the bug in the wild.</p> <p>Until Microsoft releases official security updates, you can patch your systems against these ongoing attacks using unofficial patches released by the 0patch micropatching service.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Ransomware retreat drives BEC attacks?
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/retreat-of-ransomware-roi-will-drive-bec-attacks-analyst-warns
GIST	<p>RSA CONFERENCE 2022 – San Francisco – Law enforcement crackdowns, tighter cryptocurrency regulations, and ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) operator shutdowns are driving down the return on investment for ransomware operations across the globe.</p> <p>Abnormal Security threat researcher Crane Hassold, in a presentation at the RSA Conference, laid out his latest analysis of the ransomware threat landscape, predicting that there will be a pivot from ransomware toward renewed interest in basic business email compromise (BEC) attacks in the next 6 to 12 months.</p> <p>RaaS Operator Crackdowns</p> <p>Ransomware attacks grab headlines and have been supercharged by a few prolific RaaS operators, Hassold explained. But crackdowns on just one group can make an enormous dent.</p> <p>"Ransomware is a centralized ecosystem with small numbers of operators responsible for the majority of attacks," Hassold said.</p> <p>He pointed to the recent disappearance of Pysa, leaving just two groups, Conti and Lockbit, with more than 50% of the share of the total ransomware attacks in the first half of 2022. BEC groups, on the other hand, are diffuse and scattered, making them much harder to eradicate, Hassold added.</p> <p>Although they're not as quick to make the headlines, BEC attacks have cost business more than \$43 billion since 2016, according to the FBI, and make up \$1 out of every \$3 lost to cyberattacks, far outpacing ransomware losses, Hassold said.</p> <p>Cryptocurrency Supercharged Ransomware</p> <p>Ransomware has had a moment over the past couple of years, Hassold explained, in part because once threat actors were able to abandon arcane wire transfers to collect ransoms and rely on cryptocurrency, caps on transactions were lifted and it became simple to collect much larger amounts. But new crypto regulations are chilling the ability of these cybercriminals to rely on its infrastructure to do business, adding what Hassold called "friction" to the transactions.</p>

BEC attacks, by comparison, rely on social engineering to corrupt a business's financial supply chain to get employees to willingly part with the cash, making them exponentially harder to track and stop.

Social Engineering Works

By far, the most-used BEC tactic is the standard gift-card swindle, tricking employees to buy bogus gift cards, meaning the tried-and-true grift is still working. But Hassold said the BEC landscape is shifting from impersonating internal employees to posing as external business contacts.

Once inside a business email account, attackers will wait and gather intelligence that can help them impersonate a trusted source. Today's BEC attacks are aimed at a company's financial supply chain, and once threat actors are inside, they will look for opportunities to spoof vendor emails to send payments to controlled accounts, change direct deposit information of executives to steal their paychecks, and even order aging reports showing which vendors owe the company. Once they have an aging report, an attacker will simply try to reach out to partners and collect any outstanding balances.

In short, social engineering works.

"BEC, in my opinion, is the clear threat to enterprises everywhere," Hassold warned. "These attacks disproportionately impact business."

He added there is already evidence that ransomware operators and West African BEC attackers have already started comparing notes.

"They're not collaborating, but interacting," Hassold said. "Those relationships might harden in the future."

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HEADLINE	06/06 AlphaBay taking over dark web again
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/alphabay-dark-web-market-ranking/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>FOR YEARS, DARK web markets and the law enforcement agencies that combat them have been locked into a cycle of raid, rinse, repeat: For every online black market destroyed, another has always been there to take its place. But rarely has a dominant dark web market been busted by a massive law enforcement operation only to rise from the ashes half a decade later and regain its top spot—a feat that may very soon be achieved by AlphaBay, the once and future king of the contraband crypto-economy.</p> <p>In July of 2017, a global law enforcement sting known as Operation Bayonet took down AlphaBay's sprawling narcotics-and-cybercrime bazaar, seizing the site's central server in Lithuania and arresting its creator, Alexandre Cazes, outside his home in Bangkok. Yet in August of last year, AlphaBay's number-two administrator and security specialist, publicly known only as DeSnake, suddenly reappeared, announcing AlphaBay's resurrection in a new and improved form. Now, 10 months later, thanks in part to a tumult of takedowns and the mysterious disappearances of competing dark web markets, DeSnake's reincarnated AlphaBay is now well on its way to its former heights atop the digital underworld. By some measures, it appears to have already regained that spot.</p> <p>"Yes, AlphaBay is the #1 darknet marketplace right now," says DeSnake, writing to WIRED in a text-based conversation last week. "I did tell you we were going to be #1 before," he added, referring to our interview with AlphaBay's new admin at the time of its relaunch last summer. "As I have told you, I do what I say."</p> <p>DeSnake's boast is at least partly true: As of last week, AlphaBay had more than 30,000 unique product listings—largely drugs, from ecstasy to opioids to methamphetamines—but also thousands of listings for malware and stolen data, like Social Security numbers and credit card details. That's up from a mere 500 listings in September of last year. Another older market called ASAP displays more than 50,000 listings. But ASAP is known to allow vendors to post duplicate listings. And according to security firm Flashpoint, which closely tracks the competing markets, AlphaBay had more than 1,300 active vendors in roughly the</p>

first six months of this year, compared to about 1,000 for ASAP. According to Flashpoint's data, AlphaBay's listings also appear to be growing significantly faster.

Other markets touted in dark web forums like Archetyp and Incognito, meanwhile, have only a few thousand or just a few hundred listings. All of that suggests AlphaBay may already be the most popular market for dark web vendors to list their wares for sale.

AlphaBay's tens of thousands of product listings are still a tiny fraction of the more than 350,000 it offered before its 2017 takedown, when it was the biggest dark web market ever seen. By the FBI's estimate, it was 10 times the size of the legendary [Silk Road drug market](#). DeSnake concedes that the new AlphaBay's revenue hasn't yet come close to the level of its 2017 peak, when blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis estimates that AlphaBay generated as much as \$2 million a day in sales. (DeSnake declined to share current sales numbers but said they are "in the big digits.")

Also, unlike most competitors, the new version of AlphaBay only allows users to buy and sell in the privacy-focused cryptocurrency Monero, not Bitcoin, transactions of which can often be [tracked through blockchain surveillance](#). That makes the site's sales difficult to measure and may mean it has fewer sales per listing, since many users prefer to trade in Bitcoin.

But even accounting for that difference and other unknowns in a side-by-side analysis of dark web markets, AlphaBay appears to be the leading marketplace, or will be soon, says Ian Gray, a dark web-focused analyst at security firm Flashpoint. "The writing is on the wall that AlphaBay is probably going to regain that spot as the most popular marketplace," says Gray, "And it already seems like it's the biggest in terms of volume of vendors."

AlphaBay's quick growth—or regrowth—has been fueled in part by what Gray calls "the Great Cyber Resignation." At least 10 dark web markets have dropped offline for various reasons in the last 18 months. Some have been busted by law enforcement, like Dark Market, which was the [target of a Europol-led takedown operation early last year](#); or Hydra, the massive Russian-language drug and money-laundering market whose [servers were seized in a law enforcement raid in April](#). Others, like Dark0de and World Market, are believed to have pulled "exit scams," disappearing suddenly with their users' money. Still others, like Cannazon and White House Market, staged more considerate and organized exits, giving users time to pull out any funds held on the sites.

Until late May, that left a site called Versus as the last leading market standing. But then, just two weeks ago, DeSnake published a post on the dark web market forum Dread with evidence that pointed to a security vulnerability in Versus—provided to him, DeSnake claimed, by a user named "threesixty"—that exposed Versus' IP address, potentially leaving its users vulnerable to hackers or law enforcement. "Both threesixty and myself have the best intentions," DeSnake wrote in his post. "We hope to have a fruitful conversation about security on marketplaces."

Versus responded by immediately announcing its retirement. "We will say that there was a clear agenda behind the way this was originally handled," wrote the site's administrator, who went by the name William Gibson, "but we leave you to draw your own conclusions."

DeSnake, meanwhile, maintained both on Dread and to WIRED that he doesn't have any personal or professional connection to threesixty, the hacker whose vulnerability discovery took down AlphaBay's largest remaining competitor. "We handled it the best possible way, due to the severity of the issue," DeSnake says.

Aside from the circumstances around Versus' exit, the recently dwindling number of dark web markets is perhaps due to the generally hostile environment they face, says Flashpoint's Ian Gray. Markets are often under bombardment from distributed denial of service attacks launched by competitors using waves of junk traffic to knock them offline and have to deal with constant disputes among buyers and sellers. Market administrators also feel the ever-present threat of law enforcement looming in the background. All of this incentivizes a take-the-money-and-run approach for any dark web administrator who achieves a

certain level of success—and has allowed DeSnake, who appears to be more ambitious and persistent in his goals, to elevate AlphaBay back to the top. “With all these other shutdowns, you have so few players in the space,” says Gray. “There’s really only one that’s fairly well established, and that’s AlphaBay.” When AlphaBay first reappeared, Gray and other dark web analysts and users expressed suspicion that DeSnake might be compromised by law enforcement. Although he seemed to prove his identity as the former AlphaBay’s right hand by signing messages with the same PGP cryptographic key he’d used in the past, many dark web denizens were wary that he might be controlled by a police agency as part of an undercover operation, as when Dutch police [secretly took over the Hansa dark web drug market in 2017](#).

After nearly a year back online, though, DeSnake says he feels “vindicated,” given that few if any undercover operations have lasted that long. “For majority of vendors and customers the question has been put to rest,” DeSnake says.

If DeSnake has proven himself to be the legit heir to AlphaBay—and doesn’t pull an exit scam himself—he still faces the risk of a law enforcement takedown, which only grows as the reborn market takes the limelight. “It’s Russian roulette running a dark web marketplace, particularly with all the information we got from the AlphaBay takedown,” says Grant Rabenn, a former federal prosecutor who led the investigation that resulted in AlphaBay’s 2017 bust and the arrest of its original admin, Alexandre Cazes, who was later found dead in a Thai jail of an apparent suicide. (DeSnake has claimed, without proof, that Cazes was murdered.)

Rabenn hints that the 2017 case also resulted in US law enforcement obtaining a “fair amount of information” on AlphaBay’s staff. As the dark web market grows, that previous investigation might provide leads on DeSnake’s identity, with federal agencies refocusing their attention on AlphaBay and its new boss. “It’s definitely putting a target on your back, not only from the historical conduct and connections but also being the top one,” Rabenn says. “Everyone’s going to look for that one.”

DeSnake tells WIRED, however, that he’s developed a few forms of protection that give him confidence he’ll continue to stay a step ahead of the feds. Perhaps most importantly, he claims to be based in a former Soviet country that has no extradition treaty with the US. His choice for AlphaBay to use only Monero, rather than Bitcoin, may make the sort of blockchain analysis that contributed to the original site’s takedown far more difficult. And he claims to have built complex technical protections that include redundant infrastructure in multiple countries, along with a system called AlphaGuard that’s designed to automatically relaunch the site on new servers in the case of a bust. “We will be back and running within a few days and without a cent lost,” DeSnake says.

DeSnake has announced that he eventually hopes to develop a “decentralized marketplace network” where dark web markets are hosted across hundreds or thousands of servers—a kind of uncensorable, unseizable Bittorrent to the current markets’ Napster. He claims a test version of that decentralization scheme is planned for the end of this year, and that AlphaBay will move to it sometime in 2023. “First we want to reach the scale we did before in 2017 that is our milestone. Second, we want to launch a beta of the decentralized project,” says DeSnake “Then migrate step by step fully to allow AlphaBay to exist for many years ahead and usher the [darknet market] scene into a new golden era like we did before.”

It’s far from clear whether that plan—or DeSnake’s self-described invulnerability—is real or a mirage. But he does appear to have followed through—or will soon—on his first promise: to regain the dark web’s crown. And another period of AlphaBay’s reign may be just beginning.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Ransomware attacks drop, activities shift
SOURCE	https://www.zdnet.com/article/ransomware-attacks-have-dropped-and-gangs-are-attacking-each-others-victims/#ftag=RSSbaffb68?&web_view=true
GIST	Researchers say that while ransomware attack volumes are dropping, shifts in gang activities have pivoted more attacks than ever to the finance sector.

On Monday, cybersecurity firm KELA published its [Ransomware victims and network access sales report](#) (PDF), suggesting that the number of significant ransomware victims dropped by approximately 40%, recorded as 698 in Q1 compared to Q4 2021's 982.

On average, the company recorded 232 ransomware attacks per month during this time period. A notable shift is Conti's place as one of the most prolific ransomware groups, alongside LockBit, Hive, Alphv/Blackcat, and Karakurt.

There's no honor among thieves when it comes to Conti. The ransomware gang will just as easily target a hospital as a business, encrypting systems and demanding a hefty blackmail payment in return for a decryption key.

During the first few months of this year, Conti publicly pledged its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Following the Russian-speaking group's [declaration](#), in retaliation, an individual broke into its systems and [leaked Conti's malware code](#) and internal chat logs – a treasure trove for researchers and defenders alike.

While security teams were able to use the leaks to improve their understanding of the ransomware gang's operations, it also impacted Conti's place in the pecking order.

According to KELA, Conti has been booted from the top spot in the months following the leak. [While still active](#), it appears that Conti's victim list decreased from January, with LockBit moving up the ranks.

In Q1, LockBit hit 226 recorded victims, ranging from manufacturing and technology to the public sector. However, together with its suspected subsidiary [KaraKurt](#), Conti is still the second-most active ransomware gang in 2022.

Alphv is considered an emerging threat by KELA as a new player, having only really hit the spotlight in December 2021. The first quarter of 2022 is the first time Alphv/Blackcat has made it onto the list of the most active groups.

A few ransomware gangs, including Midas and Lorenz, are also switching up their tactics. A new victim intimidation method detected by the cybersecurity firm is for the group to publish a victim on a leak site as a "new company," and if the business refuses to pay, the post is edited to include the brand.

The most targeted sectors are manufacturing, industrial, professional services, and technology. LockBit's climb up the activity list has also impacted the number of recorded attacks against financial services, now making it into the top five targeted industries. In total, LockBit was responsible for 40% of the attacks against financial organizations in the first quarter.

We sometimes hear of malware designed to detect and boot rival malware off compromised systems, and in the same manner, ransomware groups are jostling for positions and victim territory.

KELA says that some gangs in the top list have been observed attacking each other or, at the very least, laying claim to the same victims.

The report states: "On January 15, 2022, a US-based auto dealer was claimed to be compromised by Conti. On March 23, 2022, the company was disclosed as a victim on Alphv's blog. Moreover, on April 4, 2022, Avos Locker published the same company on its site, sharing screenshots identical to Alphv's ones and the same file as the one shared by Conti.

"At this point, it is unclear if the three groups are cooperating or if it is a coincidence. Recently, researchers found out that Conti gang aimed to create smaller autonomous ransomware groups and collaborated with Alphv, AvosLocker, Hive, and HelloKitty gangs."

HEADLINE	06/06 QBot pushes Black Basta ransomware
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/qbot-now-pushes-black-basta-ransomware-in-bot-powered-attacks/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>The Black Basta ransomware gang has partnered with the QBot malware operation to spread laterally through hacked corporate environments.</p> <p>QBot (QuakBot) is Windows malware that steals bank credentials, Windows domain credentials, and delivers further malware payloads on infected devices.</p> <p>Victims usually become infected with Qbot via phishing attacks with malicious attachments. Even though it started as a banking trojan, it has had numerous collaborations with other ransomware gangs, including MegaCortex, ProLock, DoppelPaymer, and Egregor.</p> <p>Black Basta teams up with Qbot</p> <p>Black Basta is a relatively new ransomware operation that started impressively, breaching many companies in a relatively short time while demanding large ransom payments.</p> <p>Analysts at the NCC Group discovered the new partnership between Qakbot and Black Basta during a recent incident response where they were able to identify the techniques used by the threat actor.</p> <p>While ransomware gangs normally use QBot for initial access, NCC says that the Black Basta gang used it to spread laterally throughout the network.</p> <p>More specifically, the malware remotely creates a temporary service on the target host and configures it to execute its DLL using regsvr32.exe.</p> <p>Once Qakbot is up and running, it can infect network shares and drives, brute-force AD accounts, or use the SMB (Server Message Block) file-sharing protocol to create copies of itself or spread via default admin shares using current user credentials.</p> <p>“Qakbot was the primary method utilized by the threat actor to maintain their presence on the network. The threat actor was also observed using Cobalt Strike beacons during the compromise,” explains the report by the NCC Group.</p> <p>The analysts also note that they discovered a text file named “pc_list.txt” in the Windows folder, which contained a list of internal IP addresses of all systems in the network, likely generated by Qakbot.</p> <p>Disabling Windows Defender</p> <p>In the recent attack observed by the NCC responders, the Black Basta demonstrates the same characteristics that were seen since BleepingComputer initially reported on it.</p> <p>These characteristics include modifying the wallpaper icon, deleting shadow copies, appending the .basta extension on encrypted files, and generating a company ID in the ransom notes.</p> <p>However, NCC states that the threat actors also disable Windows Defender to evade detection and minimize the chances of jeopardizing the success of the encryption step.</p> <p>The ransomware operators achieved this goal either by executing PowerShell commands or creating a GPO on a compromised Domain Controller, which would perform changes on the Windows Registry.</p> <p>Qakbot can quickly move inside compromised networks, snatching account credentials and pivoting to adjacent workstations. Still, the ransomware payload isn't immediately fetched, so there's always a window of opportunity for the defenders before catastrophe hits.</p>

	The trojan has intricate and varying attack pathways , each with its own opportunities for detection, but they all begin with the arrival of a malicious email. Hence, this is where the most attention needs to be paid, avoiding opening attachments or clicking on embedded links.
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HEADLINE	06/06 How anonymous is Bitcoin, really?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/science/bitcoin-nakamoto-blackburn-crypto.html
GIST	<p>Alyssa Blackburn, a data scientist at Rice University and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, has spent several years performing digital detective work with her trusty lab assistant, Hail Mary, a shiny black computer with orange trim. She has been collecting and analyzing leaks from the Bitcoin blockchain, the immutable public ledger that has recorded all transactions since the cryptocurrency's launch in January 2009.</p> <p>Bitcoin represents a techno-utopian dream. Satoshi Nakamoto, its pseudonymous inventor, proposed that the world run not on centralized financial institutions but on an egalitarian, math-based electronic money system distributed through a computer network. And the system would be "trustless" — that is, it would not rely on a trusted party, such as a bank or government, to arbitrate transactions. Rather, as Satoshi Nakamoto wrote in a 2008 white paper, the system would be anchored in "cryptographic proof instead of trust." Or, as T-shirts proclaim: "In Code We Trust."</p> <p>The practicalities have proved complicated. Price turbulence is enough to induce the Bitcoin bends, and the system is environmentally destructive, since the computational network uses exorbitant amounts of electricity.</p> <p>Ms. Blackburn said her project was agnostic to Bitcoin's pros and cons. Her goal was to pierce the scrim of anonymity, track the transaction flow from Day 1 and study how the world's largest cryptoeconomy emerged.</p> <p>Satoshi Nakamoto had presented the currency as anonymous: For Bitcoin transactions (buying, selling, sending, receiving et cetera), users employ pseudonyms, or addresses — alphanumeric cloaks that hide their real identities. And there was apparent confidence in the anonymity; in 2011, WikiLeaks announced that it would accept donations via Bitcoin. But over time, research revealed data leakage; the identity protections weren't so watertight after all.</p> <p>"Drip-by-drip, information leakage erodes the once-impenetrable blocks, carving out a new landscape of socioeconomic data," Ms. Blackburn and her collaborators report in their new paper, which has not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal.</p> <p>Aggregating multiple leakages, Ms. Blackburn consolidated many Bitcoin addresses, which might have seemed to represent many miners, into few. She pieced together a catalog of agents and concluded that, in those first two years, 64 key players — some of whom were the community's "founders," as the researchers called them — mined most of the Bitcoin that existed at the time.</p> <p>"What they figured out, just how concentrated early mining and use of Bitcoin was, that's a scientific discovery," said Eric Budish, an economist at the University of Chicago. Dr. Budish, who has conducted research in this realm, received a two-hour video preview with the authors. Once he came to understand what they had done, he thought, "Wow, this is cool detective work," he said. Referring to those early key players, Dr. Budish suggested that the paper be titled "The Bitcoin 64."</p> <p>The computer scientist Jaron Lanier, an early reader of the paper, called the investigation "important and significant" in its ambitions and social implications. "The nerd in me is interested in the math," said Mr. Lanier, who is based in Berkeley, Calif. "The techniques used to extract information are interesting."</p> <p>The demonstration of blockchain leakage, he noted, will be surprising to some, not to others. "This thing isn't hermetically sealed," Mr. Lanier said. He added: "I don't think it's the end of the story. I think there's further innovation that will take place, extracting information from these types of systems."</p>

One of Ms. Blackburn's tactics was simple perseverance. "I kicked it till it broke," she said, recalling how the principal investigator, Erez Lieberman Aiden, an applied mathematician, computer scientist and geneticist at Baylor College of Medicine and Rice University, characterized her method.

More precisely, Ms. Blackburn developed hacks for the period of time that was of particular interest: from the cryptocurrency's start to when Bitcoin achieved parity with the U.S. dollar in February 2011, which coincided with the establishment of the Silk Road, a Bitcoin-based black market. She leveraged human lapses such as insecure user behavior; she exploited operational features inherent to Bitcoin's software; she deployed established techniques for linking the pseudonymous addresses; and she developed new techniques. Ms. Blackburn was particularly interested in miners, the agents who verify transactions by engaging in an elaborate computational tournament — a puzzle hunt, of sorts, guessing and checking random numbers against a target, in search of a lucky number. When a miner wins, they earn Bitcoin income.

Whether 64 seems like a small or large number of key miners depends on one's proximity to the crypto undertow. Scholars have [questioned whether](#) Bitcoin is truly a decentralized currency. From Dr. Lieberman Aiden's perspective, the population under investigation was "even more concentrated than it seems." Although the analysis showed that the big players numbered 64 over two years, at any given moment, according to the researchers' modeling, the effective size of that population was only five or six. And on many occasions, just one or two people held most of the mining power.

As Ms. Blackburn described it, there were very few people "wearing the crown," functioning as arbiters of the network — "which is not the ethos of decentralized trustless crypto," she said.

Finding treasures in the data

For Ms. Blackburn and Dr. Lieberman Aiden, Bitcoin's data — 324 or so gigabytes archived in the blockchain — presented a cache of temptation. Dr. Lieberman Aiden's lab does biological physics and widely applied mathematics; one focus is three-dimensional [genome](#) mapping. But as a scholar, he is also intrigued by the use of new kinds of data to explore complex phenomena. In 2011, he published a [quantitative cultural analysis using more than five million digitized books](#) from 1800 to 2000, with Google Books and collaborators. "[Culturomics](#)," he called it. For instance, the team introduced the Google Ngram Viewer, which lets users type in a [word or phrase](#) and observe its usage plotted over the centuries.

In the same spirit, he wondered what treasures might be submersed in Bitcoin's data lake. "We literally have a record of every single transaction," he said. "These are remarkable economic and sociological data sets. Clearly, there's a lot of information in there, if you can get at it."

Getting at it proved nontrivial. Ms. Blackburn was barred from the university's supercomputing cluster — with her file folder labeled "Bitcoin," she was suspected of mining the cryptocurrency. "I objected," she said. She said she tried to convince an administrator that she was conducting research, but "they were completely unmoved."

A key tactic of Ms. Blackburn's was to trace patterns in plots of numbers that in theory should have been random and meaningless. In one case, she was chasing the "extranonce," one piece of the mining puzzle: a short field of 0s and 1s tucked within a longer string that encodes each block, or bundle, of transactions. The extranonce leaked information about a computer's activity. This led Ms. Blackburn to reconstruct the miners' behavior: when they were mining, when they stopped and when they started up again. She speculates that the extranonce's leaky behavior was tolerated because it allowed Bitcoin's creator to keep an eye on miners; the source code was modified to plug this leak shortly before Satoshi Nakamoto disappeared from the public Bitcoin community in December 2010.

Once Ms. Blackburn had put various toeholds to use — allowing her to erode the identity-masking protections — she began merging addresses, linking nodes on a graph, consolidating the effective population of mining agents. Then she cross-referenced and validated the results with information scraped from Bitcoin discussion forums and blogs. Initially, the catalog of agents who mined most of the Bitcoin

tallied a couple of thousand; then it hovered for a while around 200. Ultimately, Hail Mary spit out 64. (Eventually, Hail Mary's brains were incorporated into the lab's computer cluster, Voltron.)

The study's purpose was not to name names; it's the job of the F.B.I. and the I.R.S. to bust Bitcoin criminals. But the researchers pinpointed the identities of a couple of the top players who were publicly known Bitcoin criminals: Agent No. 19 is Michael Mancil Brown, a.k.a. "Dr. Evil," who was found guilty of a 2012 fraud and extortion scheme involving Mitt Romney, then a candidate for president. Agent No. 67 is associated with Ross Ulbricht, a.k.a. "DreadPirateRoberts," creator of the Silk Road. Naturally, Agent No. 1 is Satoshi Nakamoto — whose true identity the researchers did not try to determine.

Mark Gerstein, a professor of bioinformatics at Yale University, found in the research implications for data privacy. He recently stored a [genome on a private blockchain](#), which allowed for a secure and tamperproof record. But he noted that in a public setting, as with Bitcoin's blockchain, a data set's size and subtle patterns made it susceptible to breaches, even as the data remained immutable. (Ms. Blackburn wasn't tampering with the Bitcoin blockchain's records.)

"That's the amazing thing about big data," Dr. Gerstein said. "If you have a big enough data set, it starts to leak information in [unexpected](#) ways." Even more so when data from different sources are connected, he said: "When you combine one data set with another to make a bigger data set, nonobvious linkages can arise."

'Decentralization theater'

Once Ms. Blackburn had assembled the catalog of agents, she analyzed the income they had reaped from mining. She found that within a few months of the cryptocurrency's introduction — and contrary to Bitcoin's egalitarian promise — a classic distribution of income inequality emerged: A small fraction of the miners held most of the wealth and power. (Mining income demonstrated what is called a Pareto distribution, after Vilfredo Pareto, a 19th-century economist.)

The lab unintentionally replicated this dynamic when they invented "CO2 coin," a cryptocurrency that could be used to buy snacks from a student-run store. In due course, some CO2 miners became more successful than others, and the store marked up snack prices catering to the tastes of the rich.

"The people who had a lot of crypto resources had very strong control over what the store would acquire, which other people didn't feel great about," Dr. Lieberman Aiden recalled. The economy collapsed — that is, there was a revolt — when the shop began charging in CO2 to use the coffee machine.

In the formal study, Ms. Blackburn also observed that the concentration of resources threatened the network's security, with a miner's computational resources being directly proportionate to his or her mining income. On several occasions, individual miners wielded more than 50 percent of the computational power and, as a result, could have taken over like a tyrant using what's called a "[51 percent attack](#)." For instance, they could have cheated the system and repeatedly spent the same Bitcoins on different transactions.

Sarah Meiklejohn, a cryptographer at University College London, said that the investigation's findings, assuming they were error-free, provide empirical confirmation of an "intuition that has been floating around in this space for a while." (Dr. Meiklejohn developed some [address-linking techniques](#) used in the investigation and recently devised a technique for tracking a type of transaction flow called a [peel chain](#).)

"We all kind of knew that mining was fairly centralized," she said. "There aren't that many miners. This is true even today, of course, and it was even more true at the beginning." As for what should be done about it, "we do need to really examine that question," she said. "How do we make mining more decentralized?" She thought the results of this investigation might encourage the field to take the issue more seriously.

But to add a twist, Ms. Blackburn found that while some miners had the power to execute 51 percent attacks, they repeatedly chose not to. Rather, they acted altruistically — preserving the cryptocurrency's integrity, even though the decentralization-based fraud-prevention mechanism had been compromised.

In parsing this finding, Ms. Blackburn’s team turned to the tools of experimental economics. They gathered human subjects online to participate in game-theory scenarios that modeled the “social dilemma” faced by the founders — that is, how people behave when they find themselves as the trustee of an appreciating good.

“In scenarios like this, it appears that people don’t like to kill the golden goose — they don’t like to spoil it for the group,” Dr. Lieberman Aiden observed. Whatever you believe about the motivations of the “Bitcoin 64,” he said, the fact that the network was vulnerable to individual decision makers changes the understanding of its security.

“Sure, decentralization protects the blockchain,” he said. “But even on occasions when the mining pool became centralized, the dominant miners declined to attack it. That is a very different picture than the idealized model people have for why these cryptocurrencies are secure.”

As the authors concluded in the paper: “Although Bitcoin was designed to rely on a decentralized, [trustless network](#) of anonymous agents, its early success rested instead on cooperation among a small group of altruistic founders.”

For Glen Weyl, an economist at Microsoft Research who was consulted on the research, this finding demonstrates how decentralization played a rhetorical rather than substantive role. “And that rhetorical role was very powerful — it bound together this community, much as other myths have bound together other communities, like nations,” Dr. Weyl said. But the myth and the promise, he said, were in tension with the reality that emerged. “It’s just fascinatingly ironic, and also predictable, repeating the historical patterns it aspires to erase.”

Mr. Lanier called it “decentralization theater.” Cryptocurrencies create an illusion: “‘Now we’re in utopia. Everything’s decentralized. Everybody’s equal.’ There’s this notion of democracy without annoyance.”

But, he said, these systems end up hiding a new elite, which is probably just an old elite in a new arena. And the technology cuts both ways. “Whatever you think you can achieve using new algorithms, or big data, or whatever, can also be used against you,” Mr. Lanier said. “The same algorithms can be used by scientists to interrogate and investigate these castles that are put up by the new elite.”

One moral of the story, Ms. Blackburn said, is simply: “You have to be careful.” There is a limited timeline for encryption, “a horizon beyond which it will no longer be useful. When you are encrypting private data and making it public, you cannot assume that it’ll be private forever.”

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HEADLINE	06/06 Edmonds SD nearly scammed for \$2.7M
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/edmonds-school-district-nearly-scammed-for-27m-investigation-into-scammer-launched
GIST	<p>EDMONDS, Wash. - The Edmonds School District was caught in a phishing scam, nearly costing taxpayers millions of dollars.</p> <p>A bank helped the district get its money back, according to a district spokesperson, after it caught something wrong on its system.</p> <p>The district admitted Monday it accidentally sent a \$2.7 million check meant for the contractor rebuilding a school in Lynnwood to the wrong address. It happened after getting an email from someone posing as the contractor's CFO back in March, according to an emailed statement from a district spokesperson.</p> <p>“This was shocking. This is something we’d not ever dealt with before,” Spokesperson Harmony Weinberg stated.</p>

	<p>The district claims someone even tried cashing the check, but the bank intercepted it and got the district and Lynnwood Police involved.</p> <p>“We are grateful for all the law enforcement, grateful for the bank for catching this and realizing this was kind of an odd request for someone to do this,” Weinberg said.</p> <p>She adds they have checks and balances in place and technology to protect them from scams, so now they're looking at what more they can do going forward.</p> <p>“Our business and finance department is looking into the protocols we have in place to protect us from situations like this and also look into strengthening those even more,” she said.</p> <p>This case is being investigated as felony theft, and police on Monday would not say if they’ve identified a suspect.</p> <p>The district website shows the new Spruce Elementary School is still set to open this fall.</p>
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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	06/07 Court upholds saboteur terror sentencing
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/court-upholds-terrorism-sentencing-pipeline-saboteur-85223185
GIST	<p>DES MOINES, Iowa -- A federal appeals court on Monday upheld an eight-year prison sentence for an environmental activist who tried to sabotage the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.</p> <p>Jessica Reznicek pleaded guilty in June 2021 to a charge of conspiracy to damage an energy facility for vandalizing construction sites on the 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) pipeline in 2016 and 2017.</p> <p>Iowa U.S. District Judge Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger included a terrorism-related enhancement in her sentencing, finding that the crime was “calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government.” Reznicek appealed that enhancement, arguing that she was acting against a private company.</p> <p>But the appeals court found that “any error was harmless” in Ebinger's sentencing because the judge had noted she would have imposed the eight-year sentence regardless of the terrorism enhancement, the Des Moines Register reported.</p> <p>An attorney for Reznicek declined to comment on the court's decision.</p> <p>Ruby Montoya, another activist who acted with Reznicek, has pleaded guilty to a charge in the incident. But she has attempted to withdraw that plea, arguing she was unfairly pressured into entering it.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Nigeria citizens bear brunt of attacks
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/nigerian-civilians-bear-brunt-of-attacks-by-armed-groups/2022/06/06/dc035bbe-e5cd-11ec-a422-11bbb91db30b_story.html
GIST	<p>Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, faces a myriad of security threats — from Islamic State-linked militants in the north to separatist movements in the south.</p> <p>Much of the violence is related to religious extremism, but some attacks are fueled by conflicts over natural resources. What all have in common, though, is that civilians are most often the victims.</p> <p>Armed groups are able to carry out prolonged assaults in remote locations where help is often delayed by an inadequate security presence. In many cases, accurate death tolls are never compiled.</p>

A look at some of the attacks targeting Nigerian civilians in the past five years:

JUNE 5, 2022 — Gunmen attack a service at St. Francis Catholic Church in Owo, located in Ondo state in southwestern Nigeria. A local state legislator says at least 50 people were killed.

APRIL 2022 — An armed gang attacks four villages in a remote corner of Plateau state in northern Nigeria, killing more than 100 people.

MARCH 2022 — Gunmen attack a train near Nigeria's capital with explosives and gunfire, killing at least seven people.

JANUARY 2022 — Dozens of civilians are killed in three days of bloodshed by armed groups in northwest Zamfara state.

DECEMBER 2021 — Gunmen open fire on a bus in Sokoto state in northwestern Nigeria, killing at least 23 passengers.

SEPTEMBER 2021 — An attack in a village in northern Kaduna state leaves at least 37 dead. Locals say the violence stemmed from an ongoing conflict between herders and farmers over land and water issues.

NOVEMBER 2020 — Suspected members of the Islamic militant group Boko Haram kill at least 40 farmers and fishermen in northeastern Borno state.

JUNE 2020 — Suspected members of the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram kill at least 81 people in a village in northeastern Borno state.

JULY 2019 — Suspected Boko Haram extremists kill more than 60 people in an attack on villagers leaving a funeral in northeastern Borno state.

JUNE 2019 — A suicide bomber kills at least 30 people gathered to watch a soccer match on television in northeastern Borno state.

APRIL 2019 — Suspected Boko Haram extremists attack a village in northeastern Borno state, killing at least 25 people who had returned home from a wedding.

FEBRUARY 2019 — Clashes between farmers and herdsman leave 29 dead in central Kaduna state.

FEBRUARY 2019 — Suspected Boko Haram militants kill at least 60 people in a town near the Cameroonian border in northeastern Borno state.

JUNE 2018 — More than 200 people die in clashes between farmers and herders in central Plateau state.

JUNE 2018 — Clashes between herders and farmers in central Plateau state leave 86 dead.

MAY 2018 — At least 24 people are killed in an attack on a mosque in northern Adamawa state.

APRIL 2018 — Gunmen kill 15 people in an attack on a Catholic church, including two priests in central Benue state.

FEBRUARY 2018 — Three suicide bombers attack a crowded market in northern Borno state, killing at least 20 people.

JANUARY 2018 — Gunmen fatally shoot at least 17 worshippers at a church service for the new year in Rivers state.

	<p>NOVEMBER 2017 — At least 50 people are killed in a suicide bombing at a mosque during morning prayers in northeastern Adamawa state.</p> <p>AUGUST 2017 — Suspected Boko Haram extremists attacked a camp for displaced people and a nearby market in northeastern Borno state, killing at least 20.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 US investigates theft of Afghan govt. funds
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/6/whodunnit-us-investigators-probe-theft-millions-af/
GIST	<p>Afghanistan's president didn't make off with oodles of cash as he fled the country last summer, but someone seems to have, according to a new inspector general's report Monday that says a key security account was drained of funds the day before the Taliban took over.</p> <p>Allegations that former President Ashraf Ghani made off with \$169 million in his helicopter can't be true, America's Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said. The chopper simply couldn't have concealed and carried what would have amounted to nearly two tons of cash, investigators said.</p> <p>But someone did manage to get to "tens of millions of dollars" that were in a vault at the National Directorate of Security. The money disappeared on Aug. 14, a day before Mr. Ghani fled and the Taliban arrived in Kabul.</p> <p>Investigators weren't able to figure out who did take the money, nor could they definitively say it was U.S. taxpayers' money in the first place — but they hinted it was a pretty good bet. Half of Afghanistan's budget came from donors, of which the U.S. was the largest operator, and public reports said the CIA funded the National Directorate of Security.</p> <p>The new report delivers a fascinating look at the Afghan government as it collapsed in August, in anticipation of the U.S. troop withdrawal.</p> <p>Investigators said Mr. Ghani had to flee so quickly that he was barefoot, and someone had to run and find him a pair of his shoes. His staff feared his own guard might turn on him and execute him, given the speed of the Taliban takeover.</p> <p>The president was whisked to the airport, where helicopters flew him out of the city.</p> <p>But they realized they didn't have a plan for where to go once in the air. Expectations of heading to areas still believed to be friendly to the government faded, and the helicopters limped to Uzbekistan, where they landed as their fuel ran out.</p> <p>Investigators said the president and his entourage, about 54 people, had limited cash on them. They had to use \$120,000 to charter a flight to Abu Dhabi, where they were quarantined by the government.</p> <p>The inspector general concluded that no more than \$1 million, and maybe as little as \$500,000, was spirited away from the presidential palace during the president's evacuation.</p> <p>Arrangements for the charter flight out of Uzbekistan and for accommodations ate up much of that, the investigators said.</p> <p>Russian officials, echoed by an Afghan ambassador, had suggested \$169 million was flown out on the helicopters, but investigators said that couldn't have happened.</p> <p>"This amount of cash would have been difficult to conceal," the inspector general concluded.</p> <p>Investigators spoke with a number of former Afghan officials to piece together their accounts of what happened, but said there were limits. For one thing, the people they were talking to were often the ones accused by others of stealing money.</p>

	<p>Two former officials said \$5 million in cash had been stashed at the presidential palace and was discovered by guards. Some officials said it was Mr. Ghani's personal fortune, while others said it was leftover campaign money for him, provided by the United Arab Emirates.</p> <p>What became of the cash is also in doubt.</p> <p>"SIGAR was unable to draw any definitive conclusion about the provenance, purpose or fate of the funds allegedly left behind at the palace," the audit said.</p> <p>Monday's report is based on interim findings, and investigators said they hope to have more answers before their final report.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Service member 'possible suspect' in attack
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/06/politics/us-military-investigating-syria-attack/index.html
GIST	<p>CNN — The US military is investigating whether an American service member set off explosives in an insider attack on a small US base in northern Syria that injured four service members in April, according to three defense officials and a statement from the military.</p> <p>One of the officials confirmed the suspect is no longer in Syria.</p> <p>The investigation into the attack on the Green Village site is being carried out by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. No one has been charged to date.</p> <p>"Army CID and Air Force OSI are conducting a joint investigation of the incident. A possible suspect, a US service member, has been identified," the military said in a statement on Monday.</p> <p>"At this point, these are just allegations, all suspects are presumed to be innocent until/unless convicted in a court of law. The investigation is ongoing, which may or may not, develop sufficient evidence to identify a perpetrator(s) and have enough evidence to ensure a conviction in a court of law. No further information will be released at this time," the statement added.</p> <p>Initially, US officials said they believed the April 7 attack was caused by indirect fire on the base in a similar manner to rocket and mortar attacks that have been carried out in the region by militia groups. However, a week later, a military statement said that after "further investigation" the attack was believed to a result of "deliberate placement of explosive charges by an unidentified individual(s) at an ammunition holding area and shower facility."</p> <p>The explosives used are described to CNN by two officials as "not insignificant" with more detonation power than a hand grenade. One official characterized the explosives as "military grade."</p> <p>The officials said the attack took place in the middle of the night and have uncovered security footage showing two instances of a figure moving quickly. It's not clear if the two pieces of footage show the same person.</p> <p>They are also looking into whether sentries were posted at either location. They say it's not clear if the timing of the attack suggests the perpetrator was not trying to cause mass casualties or was looking to get away as quietly and quickly as possible.</p> <p>None of the officials had any details about a possible motive for the attack.</p> <p>The four injured service members were diagnosed and treated for traumatic brain injuries after the explosions but returned to duty later in April.</p>

	<p>After the incident a “commander’s investigation” was initiated by the US Central Command, which oversees operations in Syria, but it was turned over to CID when it became clear the explosive pattern was not caused by incoming fire, officials say.</p> <p>“The matter remains under investigation,” US Central Command said in a statement to CNN but offered no other details.</p> <p>The Biden administration maintains around 900 troops in Syria, including special operations forces to advise and assist Syrian Democratic Forces.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	06/06 Global ship pollution rising
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/06/06/shipping-carbon-emissions-biden-climate/
GIST	<p>When the first American-made lake freighter built in more than 35 years launched in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., last year, the 639-foot ship was outfitted for the future. The M/V Mark W. Barker’s larger hatch openings and spacious flat-bottomed hold meant that, unlike most freighters transporting iron ore and limestone on this route, it could hold unusual cargo — in particular, wind turbine blades.</p> <p>But for all its modern updates, this ship won’t tap renewable energy from the large-scale wind farms planned for America’s coasts. It sails on diesel oil, the same fuel that powers most ships on the nation’s waterways.</p> <p>This contrast between a fossil-fuel powered freighter and its next-generation future cargo is the new normal for the shipping industry, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions that is proving hard to clean up. As sales of electric cars increase and renewable energy proliferates, only a few shippers have begun to try zero-emission fuels and wind-propulsion technology. Efforts to cut carbon emissions through international regulations have met resistance from shipbuilders, oil companies and countries aligned with the handful of major shippers dominating the industry.</p> <p>On Monday, the International Maritime Organization, the U.N. agency that regulates international shipping, brought together officials from more than 100 countries for a virtual meeting to discuss whether to raise their collective climate ambition. But the shipping and fossil fuel industries wield considerable influence in these negotiations: Financing for the IMO’s green ships initiative, for example, comes from Saudi Arabia, the world’s largest oil exporter.</p> <p>The lack of progress has fueled a debate about whether the United States should force carbon cuts on its own, using its leverage as an international trade hub. During last autumn’s U.N. climate talks, the Biden administration pledged to work with the IMO. But the administration also suggested it might address the industry’s emissions itself, writing in its public commitment, “the United States is also exploring ways to support decarbonization of international maritime and aviation energy use through domestic action.”</p> <p>Yet evidence of this action is hard to find.</p> <p>Biden officials are wary of taking steps that might increase costs, disrupt trade or lead to a case that would reach the Supreme Court’s conservative majority, which has been skeptical of the federal government’s authority to regulate carbon emissions. And the industry’s unique structure — ship owners often register their vessels in other countries, such as Panama or the Marshall Islands, where taxes and oversight are minimal — makes it difficult for one nation to act alone. Instead of taking the lead, the administration is waiting for the IMO to act first.</p> <p>“We need the administration to move on this,” said Madeline Rose of the environmental group Pacific Environment. “They are working to spur the clean fuel transition, really putting a lot of money and time</p>

into the fuels of the future. But they have still made no public commitment to using their full domestic powers of regulation to reduce ship emissions.”

As a global body, the IMO remains best positioned to set a worldwide zero-emission target for ships. But the agency has long resisted calls to phase out fossil fuels; it aims to [cut ship emissions in half](#) by 2050, compared with 2008 levels.

Experts say the target doesn’t deliver the reductions necessary to avoid catastrophic climate impacts. State Department officials are pushing the London-based organization to impose a 2050 deadline for shippers to eliminate their emissions, aligning the industry with the Paris climate agreement.

But even if they reach a more aggressive target, which won’t be set until next year, it could be years more before they agree on additional rules to meet it. Meanwhile, vessel emissions are rising.

Ships release about 1 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, [according to the IMO](#), roughly equal to Texas and California’s combined annual carbon output. While worldwide shipping accounts for nearly 3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions today, experts say it could reach 17 percent or more by 2050 as global trade expands and other industries reduce their fossil fuel consumption.

During the pandemic, Americans went on a shopping spree that snarled supply chains and jammed key ports from Southern California to South Carolina. An [analysis](#) by London shipbroker Simpson Spence Young found that increased port congestion, longer trade routes and higher travel speeds caused global shipping emissions to rise by nearly 5 percent last year, surpassing pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

The uptick in emissions underscores the challenges presented by an industry that carries about 90 percent of the world’s trade, most of it in vessels burning molasses-thick bunker fuel made from the dregs of refined petroleum products.

Customers are [pressuring the industry](#) to reduce its carbon footprint, and a small number of shippers are experimenting with alternative fuels such as hydrogen and ammonia. The Danish firm Maersk has ordered a dozen ships that can run on both conventional fuel and what the industry calls green methanol, which is made using renewable energy and captured carbon dioxide. Smaller vessels are leading the way, advancing new technology that may later guide the decarbonization of cargo ships. Crowley Maritime, the company building the first fully [electric U.S. tug boat](#), expects it to be operational by mid-2023. The first [hydrogen fuel cell passenger ferry](#) in the United States will begin serving stops along San Francisco’s waterfront this summer.

But carbon-neutral fuels cost more, are not widely available and require significant upgrades to the infrastructure at ports and on the ships themselves. The bipartisan infrastructure law President Biden signed last year included billions of dollars to support hydrogen development, which may eventually lower its cost in the United States. Although it provides \$2.25 billion to modernize American ports, only one of the [projects receiving funding](#) so far includes upgrades that would directly reduce emissions from ships. For more than a year, Angelo Logan and other environmental justice advocates have been pushing Biden officials to act.

Logan lives in Long Beach, a portside community where adults are hospitalized because of asthma at higher rate than across California, according to a [2019 health survey](#). Other members of the nationwide activist network hail from inland port and seaport communities on the East Coast and in Texas, where air pollution from thousands of diesel engines on ships, trucks and cargo-handling equipment poses a constant threat. Although the Environmental Protection Agency regulates these pollutants separately from greenhouse gas emissions, supporters of stronger regulation say the two are linked — tighter pollution controls could be impossible to meet with diesel engines, forcing the industry to adopt zero-emission fuels.

“We need this administration to really hunker down and get aggressive,” Logan said in an interview.

Environmentalists and others say that by waiting for the international agency to act, the United States is ceding the authority it has to lower shipping emissions on its own and bolstering the industry's arguments for delay. They want Biden to set specific targets for all ships calling on American ports to zero out their greenhouse gas emissions, as well as new rules requiring ships to turn off their engines and plug into the power grid while docked.

The Moving Forward Network, where Logan works as campaign director, is pushing the EPA to require all new marine engines to stop emitting carbon dioxide by 2035. Agency officials haven't made any commitments.

"Are they listening? Are they meeting with us? Do they say they care? Yes," Logan said. "Do their actions demonstrate that? No."

Yet the EPA's power is limited. The Clean Air Act doesn't give it authority over the majority of vessels docked in American ports. It can regulate only domestic ships, which make up a small fraction of the global problem. Between that and the fact that cars and trucks remain the single largest source of U.S. carbon pollution, ship emissions are not anywhere near the agency's top concern.

The EPA decided not to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from oceangoing vessels during the Obama administration, and officials say the agency has no plans to change its approach. A spokesperson said in an email that the agency works with the State Department and the Coast Guard to achieve greenhouse gas reductions through international negotiations.

Many of the steps climate activists demand require congressional approval, which they concede is unlikely. But there are less controversial routes to lower emissions, they say.

One of the simplest ways to reduce a ship's fuel consumption, and its carbon emissions, is to slow it down. The administration could lower travel speeds in federal waters, activists said, or offer shippers incentives to adopt zero-emission technologies. It could also enforce greenhouse gas emissions limits within the 200-mile offshore buffer zone established years ago to limit air pollution from ships.

Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), whose district includes the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, plans to introduce a bill this month that would establish the nation's first monitoring and reporting system for carbon emissions from large ships, modeled on the European Union's.

"We're beginning to say we want to be a player in this game and we want to set standards," Lowenthal said in an interview. "But we're not going to be so far out there that it would divert traffic from the U.S."

For environmentalists in the United States and abroad, the E.U.'s approach has become a model of what's possible. The European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, last year announced that it would [tackle shipping emissions](#) independent from the IMO by bringing them into its emissions-trading scheme.

This proposal — the details of which still have to be negotiated before it becomes law — would charge shippers for every ton of carbon dioxide they emit, beginning in 2023. It would apply to ships passing between European ports and also to 50 percent of the inbound and outbound emissions from all other large vessels. A second proposal would require ships to start switching to low-carbon fuels by 2025.

Europe's move has sent shock waves through the industry.

"It really is suboptimal for an international industry like maritime to have each country acting on its own," said Jennifer Carpenter, chief executive of American Waterways Operators, the national trade association representing tugboat and barge owners in the U.S. The industry needs a "clear target," she said, otherwise "we risk a balkanized approach, because folks are going to say, 'I can't wait.'"

In the United States, advocates say they have little hope of the Biden administration or Congress copying Europe's approach. Instead, they are looking to California.

According to Southern California air-quality regulators, ship traffic is on pace to be the top source of smog-causing pollutants by 2028. But because of the pandemic, this timeline is in flux. If the region continues to experience massive port congestion, ships could become the area's dominant polluters as early as 2024.

Aoife O'Leary, an attorney and economist who focuses on the shipping industry, said states have extraordinary power to regulate the fuel ships use near their coastline. California has long required that vessels within 24 miles of its coast use cleaner fuel to protect nearby communities.

"Even if you only have this rule for 24 nautical miles, you've created a market for zero-emission vessels," O'Leary said. "There are things that could be done instantly to bring down emissions that just aren't being done."

California started regulating oceangoing vessels in 2007, when it approved a rule requiring most visiting ships to connect to shore power. One year later, it ordered ships calling on its ports to switch to low-sulfur fuel. The California Air Resources Board recently set the nation's [first zero-emission standard for ferries](#) and mandated cleaner engine upgrades for tugboats and other harbor vessels.

Bonnie Soriano, chief of the board's freight activity branch, said regulators are now having "serious discussions" about whether to write tougher rules reigning in ship emissions.

"It's becoming a bigger piece of the pie, as other sources are cleaned up faster," she said.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Study: carbon dioxide levels 50% higher
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/06/carbon-dioxide-levels-increase-global-heating-study
GIST	<p>The level of carbon dioxide in the world's atmosphere is now more than 50% higher than during the pre-industrial era, further pushing the planet into conditions not experienced for millions of years, well before the emergence of humans, US government data shows.</p> <p>The latest measurements showing the relentless upward march of CO2 follows scientists' new warning that the world may still barrel into disastrous climate change even if planet-heating emissions are drastically cut, which governments are still failing to achieve.</p> <p>"It's depressing that we've lacked the collective will power to slow the relentless rise in CO2," said Ralph Keeling, a geochemist who runs CO2 measurements for the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in Hawaii. "Fossil-fuel use may no longer be accelerating, but we are still racing at top speed towards a global catastrophe."</p> <p>In May, the Mauna Loa Observatory, perched high on the slopes of a volcano on Hawaii's Big Island, measured a CO2 concentration of 421 parts per million, just the latest escalation in an inexorable rise in CO2 due to the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.</p> <p>Before the Industrial Revolution, the Earth's CO2 levels were about 280ppm for almost 6,000 years, providing a stable basis for the advance of human civilization. Since then, however, humans have released about 1.5tn tons of CO2, enough to warm the planet for hundreds or thousands of years to come.</p> <p>This huge leap in CO2 emissions, a heat-trapping gas that is the primary driver of global heating, has quickly pushed the world into conditions not seen in 4m years, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa), which also takes measurements at Mauna Loa.</p> <p>"Carbon dioxide is at levels our species has never experienced before," said Pieter Tans, senior scientist at Noaa's global monitoring laboratory. "We have known about this for half a century, and have failed to do anything meaningful about it. What's it going to take for us to wake up?"</p>

The last time CO₂ levels were this high was in an era before hominids walked upright, a time called the Pliocene, about 4.1m years ago, when concentrations reached around 400ppm. The world was then radically different from how we know it now, with forests in the Arctic and sea levels [five to 25 meters higher](#) than today, which would be enough to drown many of the world's largest cities.

The epochal change in our atmosphere, due to the burning of coal, oil and gas to power our cars, trucks, houses and factories, [has already caused severe heatwaves and worsening floods, droughts and storms](#). These impacts will become catastrophic should global heating advance further, beyond 1.5C above the pre-industrial era, scientists say.

This limit, which was agreed to by the world's governments in the 2015 Paris climate pact, is now increasingly likely to be breached in the coming decades. A new research paper has found that the lingering effect of past emissions means there is a 42% chance the 1.5C limit will be passed even if emissions are halted immediately.

The new study, which looks at the ongoing impact of CO₂ as well as methane, nitrogen oxide and aerosols, like sulfur or soot, found that there is a two-thirds chance of temporarily going above 1.5C if emissions cuts are left until 2029. Scientists have said global emissions must be slashed in half this decade, and zeroed out by 2050, if the world is to have a chance of avoiding dire climate consequences.

Despite this, emissions, which dipped during 2020 as Covid-related restrictions kicked in, surged again last year and show no sign of the steep drop needed to avoid severe impacts. "Our study found that in all cases, we are committed by past emissions to reaching peak temperatures about five to 10 years before we experience them," said Kyle Armour, a climate scientist at the University of Washington and a report co-author.

Michelle Dvorack, a University of Washington doctoral student in oceanography, who led the research, [published in Nature Climate Change](#), added: "Our findings make it all the more pressing that we need to rapidly reduce emissions."

Bill Hare, chief executive of Climate Analytics, said that the world "appears to be sleepwalking to disaster. Governments appear to think taking more action is too hard.

"What will be more difficult is dealing with a three-degree world. Already this year we've seen horrific impacts, like the heatwave in India and Pakistan, and floods in the same region. This is just the beginning."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Man drowns as Arizona police watch
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/06/06/tempe-police-bickings-drowning/
GIST	<p>Sean Bickings pleaded for help as he struggled to stay afloat in a reservoir in Tempe, Ariz., late last month. But Tempe police officers watched without intervening as Bickings went underwater and did not come back up, according to city officials and a transcript of body-camera footage.</p> <p>"I'm going to drown. I'm going to drown," said Bickings, 34, according to a transcript of video from the May 28 incident released by city officials.</p> <p>"OK, I'm not jumping in after you," an officer, identified as Officer 1 in the transcript, said moments later, after directing Bickings to grab onto a bridge.</p> <p>"Please help me," Bickings said. "Please, please, please."</p> <p>Soon after, Bickings drowned, according to a Friday news release by city officials.</p>

Now, three Tempe police officers have been put on “nondisciplinary paid administrative leave” as the Arizona Department of Public Safety and the Scottsdale Police Department investigate the officers’ response at the city of Tempe’s request, city officials said. The city has not released the names of the officers.

In a statement, Police Chief Jeff Glover and City Manager Andrew Ching called Bickings’s death a “tragedy.” Glover met with Bickings’s mother last week, according to officials.

The Tempe Officers Association, the city’s police union, did not immediately respond to a request for comment late Sunday.

Just after 5 a.m. on May 28, Tempe police officers responded to an apparent disturbance between Bickings and a woman at the Tempe Center for the Arts, which sits on a promenade along the Tempe Town Lake, a reservoir in the city. In its statement, the city referred to Bickings as “unsheltered.”

Body-camera footage released by the city shows officers approach and speak to a woman who identified herself as Bickings’s wife. As she picked up her belongings off the ground, she explained that she and Bickings sometimes have disagreements but said that he did not physically harm her.

Two of the officers then walked over to Bickings, who was seated on a bench facing the water, according to the body-camera footage. By this point, the officers were running the couple’s names for outstanding warrants, a standard procedure, according to the city. The police later said Bickings had three outstanding warrants, The Arizona Republic reported.

But those did not come up during Bickings’s encounter with police, according to the body-camera footage, which shows the officers trying to make small talk with Bickings as they ran the check.

That’s when Bickings slowly climbed over a short fence dividing the boardwalk and the water. When one of the officers asked what Bickings was doing, Bickings replied that he was going “for a swim.”

“I’m free to go, right?” Bickings asked.

The officers said he was not allowed to swim in the lake, but Bickings waded in and started swimming a freestyle stroke toward a bridge, according to the body-camera footage.

“How far do you think he’s going to be able to swim?” one of the officers asked, according to the footage.

Two of the officers then walked onto the bridge Bickings had swum under and watched him, according to the body-camera footage, which at that point ends “due to the sensitive nature of the remaining portion of the recording,” officials wrote at the end of the video.

Instead, the city provided a transcript of the remaining portion, which indicates that Bickings became increasingly distressed as he remained in the water. Bickings told the officers he was going to “drown,” according to the transcript.

“No, you’re not,” an officer, identified as Officer 2, replied.

Officer 1 then directed Bickings to “go to the pylon and hold on.”

“I’m drowning,” Bickings said.

“Come back over to the pylon,” Officer 2 said.

“I can’t,” Bickings said. “I can’t.”

“OK, I’m not jumping in after you,” Officer 1 said.

	<p>Bickings then begged for help and said moments later, “I can’t touch. Oh God. Please help me. Help me.”</p> <p>Bickings’s partner then joined the officers and begged them to help Bickings, according to the transcript. The officers told her to persuade Bickings to swim toward the bridge pylon. She tried and became increasingly upset. At one point, according to the transcript, Bickings’s partner tried to jump over the railing to help Bickings but did not end up doing so.</p> <p>“I’m just distraught because he’s drowning right in front of you and you won’t help,” Bickings’s partner said.</p> <p>The officers continued to tell her to calm down, saying a third officer was getting a boat.</p> <p>“No, no, no. Swim,” the woman replied, using an expletive.</p> <p>“You’re not helping,” Officer 2 said.</p> <p>Moments later, Officer 1 said that Bickings “went underneath and hasn’t come up since about 30 seconds ago.”</p> <p>For the remainder of the transcript, the officers did not address Bickings. Bickings’s partner continued to tell the officers that she loved Bickings.</p> <p>“He’s everything I got,” she said. “I can’t lose him, he’s going to die.”</p> <p>Officials said Bickings swam no more than 40 yards before he became distressed and “soon went under and did not resurface.”</p> <p>The Arizona Republic reported that a team with Tempe Fire Medical Rescue pulled Bickings’s body out of the water just before 11:30 a.m.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	06/06 Shift: far fewer teens face adult courts
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/juvenile-justice-reform-fewer-teens-in-adult-court-bdc54ff4d14026c82a305ddf212e4c1c
GIST	<p>David Harrington spent a tense eight months in a Philadelphia jail when he was a teenager — the result of a robbery charge in 2014 that automatically sent his case to the adult court system under state law.</p> <p>Only 16 at the time, he said he got into fights and spent time in isolation. He missed his sophomore year in high school and the birth of his child. He was facing five to 10 years in prison. He was on a path, he said, toward more trouble with the law.</p> <p>“I think if I would have stayed in the adult system, I would have came home probably a little worse,” said Harrington, now 24, who works as an advocate for young offenders. “I would have came home (after) listening to the ways on how to get better at ... certain illegal things, and I would have came home and been doing nonsense.”</p> <p>Instead, he was able to convince a judge to send his case down to juvenile court. He spent a month in a juvenile detention center before a judge found he did take part in the robbery and sent him home under house arrest, probation and a \$3,000 restitution order. He was allowed to see his family and friends and finish high school.</p>

Harrington's case from 2015 is indicative of a significant shift away from the "get tough" philosophy of the 1980s and '90s for youth offenders, which has resulted in far fewer children being prosecuted in U.S. adult courts. That has meant second chances for untold thousands of youths.

Data reported to the FBI each year by thousands of police departments across the country shows the percentage of youths taken into custody who were referred to adult courts dropped from 8% in 2010 to 2% in 2019. The percentage dropped to 1% in 2020, although that year's data is considered unusual because of the coronavirus pandemic, which closed many courts.

Instead, more teenagers are being sent to juvenile courts or community programs that steer them to counseling, peer mediation and other services aimed at keeping them out of trouble.

The shift has been mostly supported by law enforcement officials around the country. But some worry that leniency has emboldened a small number of young criminals, including in Connecticut, [where state lawmakers passed legislation](#) to clamp down on youth crime.

States around the country have been raising the age of adult criminal responsibility to 18 for most crimes. Only three states — Georgia, Texas and Wisconsin — continue to prosecute every 17-year-old in adult courts, according to The Sentencing Project, a Washington-based group that advocates for minimal imprisonment of youth and adults.

The "raise the age" movement has been spurred by [research](#) showing [teens' brains haven't yet fully developed](#) key decision-making functions. [Other studies show](#) locking young people up in adult systems can be harmful — physically and psychologically — in addition to putting them at more risk to commit more crimes.

"We see across the board for young folks, regardless of what they may be charged with, that what works is community-based intervention, what works is connecting young folks with people in their own communities, letting communities lead reform efforts," said Naomi Smoot Evans, executive director of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, a Washington-based nonprofit working to prevent children from being involved in the courts.

In a country where an estimated 250,000 minors were charged as adults each year in the early 2000s, the number dropped in 2019 to about 53,000, according to the nonprofit National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh.

That corresponds with a general decrease in crime across the country, including a 58% drop in youth arrests between 2010 and 2019, according to Justice Department estimates. In 2019, an estimated 696,620 youths were arrested.

Harrington, who denied the robbery allegation, was sent initially to the juvenile section of an adult jail, the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, under a state law that automatically sends youths to adult court for certain serious crimes. He faced the possibility of five to 10 years in prison.

He said he constantly had to watch his back to guard against aggression by others and got into two fights. After one, he said he was kept in solitary confinement for 30 days, which affected his mental health.

"Your hair is growing all out. You barely getting any showers. You're just in the dark in a bed. They're not really hearing you out back there," he said.

The Philadelphia Department of Prisons said in a statement that it acknowledges Harrington's recollection but "there is no documentation" of the experiences he described. The agency said he was housed in disciplinary segregation — not solitary confinement — because of the fights he was involved in.

The robbery charge is being expunged from Harrington's juvenile record after he filed a request, he said.

Harrington works for the Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project, a Philadelphia group that provides art, music and other programs in jail for teenagers charged as adults and advocates against prosecuting them in adult court. He is involved in efforts to repeal the law that automatically sent him to adult jail.

“You’d rather be at a juvenile facility getting the proper care and treatment there,” he said. “The juvenile system ... it’s better because you’re able to go home and be with your family.”

Some officials, however, including lawmakers and police chiefs, argue aspects of the reform have gone too far.

In Connecticut, the death of a pedestrian who was struck and killed in New Britain last year by a stolen car driven by a repeat teenage offender sparked calls by police officials and Republican state lawmakers to pass tougher youth crime laws — including more detention for repeat offenders.

The 17-year-old driver of the stolen car that killed Henryk Gudelski in New Britain had been arrested 13 times before on charges including reckless driving and assault.

New Britain’s police chief, Christopher Chute, believes the teen would have been detained in the adult system for those previous crimes before Connecticut raised the age of adult criminal responsibility to 18 a decade ago. He also said state judges have been rejecting many police requests to detain youth offenders.

“Talk about a broken juvenile justice system,” Chute said. “Most of us in law enforcement refer to this system as the arrest, release, repeat.”

Giovanni Circo, a University of New Haven criminal justice professor, authored a 2019 study that found no link between raising the age of adult criminal liability to 18 and crime increases.

“Not discounting anything that some of these communities are dealing with, which I’m sure is really frustrating and dangerous, but when we look at more widespread impacts of these sort of policies we just don’t really find any evidence that it has any sort of impact on overall crime rates,” he said.

For Harrington, prisons and jails are not places for children, period.

“When you’re in jail, no matter how much you stay out of trouble, trouble will find you,” Harrington said. “You’ve got to go into survival mode at a very young age. That’s not a place ... for a kid.”

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HEADLINE	06/07 Hundreds charged in crimes Capitol riot
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/capitol-siege-merrick-garland-government-and-politics-conspiracy-crime-c2e427dc0fa16077d7fb98c06e61149f
GIST	<p>More than 800 people across the U.S. have been charged in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, which left officers bloodied and sent lawmakers into hiding, and federal authorities continue to make new arrests practically every week.</p> <p>The charges against members of the angry pro-Trump mob range from low-level misdemeanors for those who only entered the Capitol to felony seditious conspiracy charges against far-right extremists.</p> <p>It’s the largest prosecution in the history of the Justice Department, whose leader, Attorney General Merrick Garland, has vowed to hold accountable “all January 6th perpetrators, at any level.”</p> <p>As the U.S. House committee investigating the attack prepares to hold a series of public hearings to detail its findings, here’s a look at where the criminal cases stand:</p> <p>_____ WHO HAS BEEN CHARGED?</p>

Authorities have arrested people in practically all 50 states in connection with the riot. They include [former police officers](#) and [U.S. military veterans](#), a [five-time Olympic swimming medalist](#) and [the son of a New York City judge](#).

Hundreds of people who went inside but didn't take part in any destruction or violence are facing only misdemeanor crimes like picketing in the Capitol and disorderly conduct that call for up to six months behind bars.

More than 250 people have been charged with [assaulting or impeding law enforcement](#) who were trying to protect the Capitol, including more than 85 accused of using a deadly or dangerous weapon or causing serious bodily injury to an officer. Others have been accused of assaulting members of the media — [one an Associated Press photographer](#) — or destroying media equipment.

The most serious cases have been brought against members of two far-right extremist groups, the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys.

The leaders of both groups have been arrested and remain locked up while they await trial later this year for seditious conspiracy, which alleges a plot to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power. The rarely used Civil War-era charge calls for up to 20 years in prison.

WHO HAS BEEN CONVICTED?

More than 300 people have pleaded guilty to a slew of crimes, including conspiracy and assault. Among them are [three Oath Keepers who have admitted to seditious conspiracy](#), are cooperating with investigators and could testify against their fellow extremists at trial.

There have been seven trials so far in the District of Columbia's federal court. The first five juries convicted the riot defendants of all charges.

The convicted include [Thomas Webster](#), a 20-year New York Police Department veteran who attacked an officer during the riot. Webster claimed he was defending himself when he tackled the officer and grabbed his gas mask.

Jurors also rejected the defense of an [Ohio man who claimed he was only "following presidential orders"](#) from former President Donald Trump when he stormed the Capitol. Dustin Byron Thompson was convicted of obstructing Congress from certifying the electoral vote and other charges.

A judge decided two other cases without a jury, acquitting one of the defendants and partially acquitting the other.

U.S. District Court Judge Trevor McFadden, who was appointed by Trump, convicted [Otero County, New Mexico, Commissioner Couy Griffin](#) of illegally entering restricted Capitol grounds, but acquitted him of engaging in disorderly conduct.

In the other misdemeanor case, McFadden found [Matthew Martin of New Mexico](#) not guilty of charges that he illegally entered the Capitol and engaged in disorderly conduct, saying it was reasonable for Martin to believe that outnumbered police officers allowed him and others to enter through the Rotunda doors.

WHAT ABOUT THE PUNISHMENTS?

Nearly 200 people have been sentenced so far. The punishments have ranged from probation to more than five years behind bars. About 100 people who were charged with lower level crimes have avoided going to prison, although some of those received time in home detention.

The longest sentence — more than [five years](#) — was given to [Robert Palmer of Largo, Florida](#), who threw a wooden plank and sprayed a fire extinguisher at officers before hurling the fire extinguisher at them.

Others who received lengthy sentences include [Jacob Chansley, the spear-carrying rioter](#) whose horned fur hat, bare chest and face paint made him one of the more recognizable figures in the attack. Chansley, who called himself “QAnon Shaman,” got about 31/2 years behind bars after admitting to entering the Senate chamber and writing a note to Vice President Mike Pence that said: “It’s only a matter of time, justice is coming.”

WHAT’S NEXT?

The two most high-profile trials — involving the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys — are expected to take place this summer and fall.

Henry “Enrique” Tarrío, who was once the Proud Boys’ top boss, and four others linked to the group [were charged on Monday](#) with seditious conspiracy after previously facing other conspiracy counts. They are scheduled to stand trial beginning Aug. 9.

Tarrío, who has since stepped down from his post as the group’s chairman, was arrested in a separate case two days before the riot and was not at the Capitol on Jan. 6. But he is accused of helping put into motion the violent attack.

The trial for the Oath Keepers leader, Stewart Rhodes, and four other members and associates the group is scheduled to start Sept. 26. Prosecutors say the Oath Keepers plotted for weeks to try to overturn the election results and prepared for a siege by purchasing weapons and setting up battle plans.

Authorities are still searching for many suspects, including the [person who planted two pipe bombs outside the offices of the Republican and Democratic national committees](#) the night before the melee.

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HEADLINE	06/07 ‘Needle spiking’ fears rise in Europe
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/07/needle-spiking-europe-britain-france/
GIST	<p>LONDON — She had eagerly looked forward to going home for the holidays and reuniting with friends over dinner and drinks. Instead, Eva Keeling, 19, says, she wound up injected by a stranger with a needle, leaving her unable to speak or function while at a bar in her hometown of Stafford, in northern England.</p> <p>“We went outside [the bar] for some fresh air ... then I ended up losing all control of my body, the ability to walk, hold my head up, I couldn’t talk — I was projectile vomiting everywhere,” Keeling told The Washington Post.</p> <p>Days after her April night out, she still felt ill and, while getting dressed, noticed her arm was swollen. Feeling “petrified,” she rushed to a hospital for blood tests and was screened for diseases such as HIV. Doctors informed her she’d been injected with a “dirty needle,” causing the infection and swelling.</p> <p>“I was so upset and shocked that it happened to me,” she said.</p> <p>Keeling is one of hundreds of people across Britain and Europe who have been victims of suspected “needle spiking” — an injection administered without consent or knowledge, often in a bar or nightclub setting, in an attack similar to the more common crime of contaminating alcoholic drinks.</p> <p>Authorities are grappling with how to prove and combat this kind of hard-to-trace attack and are seeking to raise awareness about the small but growing number of reported cases.</p> <p>French police have received more than 300 complaints of injections in various regions since the end of March but have not made arrests, according to local media reports. The victims — many of them women — often report suffering memory loss or noticing injuries only later. Neighboring Belgium has seen reports of similar incidents at a nightclub, a soccer game and a Pride festival.</p>

It's unclear whether drugs are being administered in the attacks. Doctors have [previously](#) told The Post that extremely thin needles, as "fine as hairs," are easily accessible online, as are prescription drugs, including pain killers and opium-based medicines.

Nils Marzolf, 21, said he was avoiding nightclubs because of the reports but still found himself pricked at a metro train station in the French city of Lyon last month. He checked his pockets after a stranger approached him and then found a mark on his arm, he told the TV channel BFM.

"When the doctors say it's a needle mark ... it's difficult to accept," he added. "It's difficult to ... return to public places."

The mysterious wave around France has puzzled authorities, who have yet to determine a motive or whether the reported injections contained drugs at all. It has also prompted the Interior Ministry and police to issue safety warnings urging vigilance.

In Strasbourg, in eastern France, the police appealed to witnesses to come forward with information after eight people appeared to have been injected at a rap concert. In the northern region of Pas-de-Calais, authorities issued guidance for suspected victims to get toxicology screenings.

Officials are searching for answers, and motives remain unclear.

Dawn Dines, founder of the nonprofit Stamp Out Spiking, which works to combat drink spiking in Britain, told The Post that needle-spiking remains "minuscule" compared to drink contamination, but the effects can be similar. Victims often feel "embarrassed and ashamed," she said, and can have a sense of guilt for not being able to remember events — contributing to a lack of reporting even though they are not at fault.

"It's a really difficult crime," she said. Possible motives could include assault, rape, human trafficking or even personal vendettas, she added. Dines called for better education of bar employees, security officials and those involved in the nighttime economy to stem the crime.

Merlijn Poolman, the night mayor of the Dutch city of Groningen, whose council's work includes preventing sexual harassment, told The Post that his team has set up an online helpline for residents to report such incidents. While Dutch media outlets have reported a handful of possible cases in the country, he said it was hard for medics to confirm reports in his city, including whether needles were involved.

One theory was that "there might have been attempts or copycats" with other objects or "maybe even with a needle without something in it," to spread fear without actually injecting drugs, Poolman said. "We can't conclude anything yet," he added. "We do take it seriously, but we also surely don't want to raise panic that there are needle stingers all around."

Keeling said she has a scar on her right arm. "I don't like looking at it and being reminded of it. ... I'm still dealing with it, mentally."

She remains wary of going to big events — she couldn't ride the subway in the immediate aftermath, she said, because of suspicion about strangers. She laments the lack of victim support after the incident but said spreading the word about the crime helps:

"I want to talk about it as much as possible because I want something to happen to help girls."

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HEADLINE	06/06 Federal Way police investigate shooting
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/federal-way-police-investigating-shooting/5JYYFAPCJBHOPCVSQMV4K7PDZA/
GIST	The Federal Way Police Department is investigating a shooting that officers discovered after being called to a crash Monday afternoon, police announced.

	<p>Officers were called to a crash just before 1 p.m. on Pacific Highway South at South 336th Street.</p> <p>According to police, one of the involved parties said they were taking a male in his late teens to early 20s to the hospital with a gunshot wound to his back.</p> <p>When officers arrived, they rendered aid to the wounded male until Fire and Medic personnel got to the scene. He was later taken to Harborview Medical Center in serious condition.</p> <p>The other occupants of the car got away on foot.</p> <p>Police say that evidence from the scene indicated that the male was shot by another one of the occupants of the car.</p> <p>Police don't know when or where the male was shot, or when the group began transporting him to the hospital.</p> <p>Detectives responded and are assisting with the investigation.</p> <p>Pacific Highway South was closed for a short period of time but has since reopened.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Seattle police: shooting outside lounge
SOURCE	https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2022/06/spd-investigating-after-one-reported-shot-in-gunfight-involving-security-outside-capitol-hills-mint-lounge/
GIST	<p>A man was shot and one person was in custody after a gunfight outside Capitol Hill nightclub the Mint Lounge reportedly involving a patron and club security just before last call early Sunday.</p> <p>According to radio updates, police were called to the area around the club at Pine and Minor just before 2 AM after reports of gunfire outside the venue. Arriving officers began closing down the street and marking off the area in front of the club to collect shell casings and evidence.</p> <p>Meanwhile, a gunshot wound victim arrived at nearby Harborview around 2 AM. We do not have information on their condition.</p> <p>Police reported one firearm was secured at the location and a person involved in the shooting was in custody. According to police radio updates, there was a reported exchange of gunfire involving club security as a patron was being ejected from the club.</p> <p>Pine at Minor was closed to traffic during the police response.</p> <p>The shooting is the latest in a string of near-2 AM gun violence in the area of Mint. In March, police were called to the street after reports of a dispute and threats of gun violence included a man reportedly shooting himself in the hand. In February, another shooting left shattered glass at a nearby restaurant, riddled parked vehicles with bullets, and sent bullets flying into nearby apartments. SPD typically responds with significant numbers of officers and emphasis patrol staff to the hot spot including this major response to a fight outside the club earlier this year.</p> <p>UPDATE 1:20 PM: SPD's brief on the incident confirms CHS's reporting and adds new details. Police say both the security employee and the man who was shot were arrested for investigation of reckless endangerment.</p> <p><i>On 06-05-2022 at 0142 hours, officers responded to a report of shots fired outside the Mint Lounge in the 1200 block of Pine St. Multiple other callers reported seeing a shooter running south bound. A suspect was described as a male in a black puffy jacket. Another caller reported a person down in the 1500 block</i></p>

of Minor Av. Officers located an involved person in the 1500 block of Minor who claimed he was shot at by the suspect (male in a puffy jacket) he was arguing with outside the night club. The male stated he was security for the club and that he returned fire at the suspect. Officers recovered a firearm from the security employee and located evidence of a shooting apparently from his firearm. Soon after initiating the investigation, a male fitting the description of the outstanding suspect, arrived at HMC with a non-life-threatening gunshot wound. He claimed he was shot "at the Lounge" by "security" but made no other statements. Officers did not locate a firearm or evidence of a shooting that may have come from the person who was shot. After interviewing witnesses, reviewing evidence, and consulting with GVRU detectives, both subjects were charged with Reckless Endangerment. The security employee was booked to KCJ and the subject at HMC was CBO'd due to being admitted to the hospital.

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HEADLINE	06/07 'Happy water' synthetic drug cocktail
SOURCE	https://www.vice.com/en/article/epzqvm/happy-water-drug-cocktail
GIST	<p>Authorities in Southeast Asia are raising the alarm over a literal cocktail of drugs growing in popularity in Thailand and Myanmar in recent months. The powdered mixture of synthetic substances—including MDMA, methamphetamine, diazepam, and ketamine—is being dissolved in liquid to produce a psychoactive beverage known as "happy water."</p> <p>Last week, Myanmar's Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) revealed that local authorities had seized 497 grams of packeted "happy water" powder with a street value of 5,680,000 kyat (\$3,055). Each packet sold for the equivalent of \$43, the CCDAC claimed, and were typically distributed at entertainment venues, bars, and clubs throughout Yangon, Myanmar's largest city.</p> <p>"Subsequent investigations are underway to unearth those distributing such hazardous drugs to the youth," the Committee declared in a Facebook post on Saturday. But this wasn't the first drug authorities in the region had seen of the illicit concoction.</p> <p>On March 18, Thai police raided a villa in the heart of the beach resort town Pattaya, arresting over 20 people and seizing a number of illicit substances including Happy Water powder.</p> <p>A month later, authorities publicly warned that the drug was being sold illegally on social media and at entertainment venues in the area. Police lieutenant general Sarayut Sanguanpokhai, chief of the Narcotics Suppression Bureau (NSB), similarly claimed the substance was popular among Thai and foreign visitors at local nightspots, and highlighted efforts by police to crack down on drug gangs involved in its distribution.</p> <p>Back then, reports of Happy Water appeared to be localised to a handful of seizures in Chonburi province, as authorities stepped up their campaign against the drug cocktail and arrested those suspected of trafficking it.</p> <p>Inshik Sim, illicit drugs researcher at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), told VICE World News at the time that the somewhat sporadic emergence of the substance ought to be understood as just one part of a "wider challenge of synthetic drugs," which have flooded the region in historic quantities over the past 18 months.</p> <p>Now that Happy Water has turned up in Myanmar, he's warning that other countries throughout Southeast Asia need to be paying more attention to this novel, potentially dangerous substance.</p> <p>"It is difficult to pinpoint when exactly the product emerged in Thailand, but it appears to be relatively new," Sim told VICE World News. While there is currently no known fatality resulting from its use there, he added, "what is concerning is that often we have observed fatalities due to consumption of drug products [containing] a mixture of synthetics."</p> <p>As an example, Sim cited a product known as "K-powder," reported in Thailand in 2021, that contained a similar blend of meth, ketamine, and diazepam, as well as liquid MDMA products that</p>

	<p>have started popping up in Cambodian club scenes. The UNODC similarly reported as early as 2009 that a bottled beverage, also being sold under the name “happy water” and containing a mixture of various substances such as methamphetamine, ketamine, and MDMA, had started appearing in China. Another product, marketed as “fairy water” and containing a blend of MDMA, codeine, and nimetazepam, a powerful hypnotic, appeared around the same time.</p> <p>In cases such as these, Sim suggested that unpredictable potencies and the consequent risk of a drug overdose are serious causes for concern. Even if a person consumes a batch of happy water without any adverse effects, there’s no way of knowing for sure that the next packet will contain the same dose—or even the same drugs.</p> <p>“It is important to note that different ‘happy water’ products contain different substances, showing flexibility of organised crime in creating synthetic drug products,” said Sim. “The key issue here is that some batches of ‘happy water’ may contain significant quantities of these substances compared to other batches, as there is no ‘quality control.’”</p> <p>“When users consume those batches with high doses of these substances, a risk for overdose, and potentially fatality, increase significantly.”</p>
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HEADLINE	06/07 Australia federal police targets Italian mafia
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jun/07/thousands-of-italian-mafia-operating-in-australia-federal-police-say
GIST	<p>Thousands of Italian mafia members are operating in Australia and until recently had gone largely undetected while “pulling the strings” of other criminal gangs, Australian federal police say.</p> <p>In a press conference on Tuesday, AFP assistant commissioner Nigel Ryan detailed the extent of Italian organised crime, including the ‘Ndrangheta, in Australia and plans to target them.</p> <p>He said members of the notorious Calabrian mafia had concealed themselves within the community for decades while conducting money laundering in secrecy.</p> <p>Police believe up to 5,000 mafia members are operating in Australia, in league with their colleagues in Italy.</p> <p>The Calabrian mafia work with other organised crime groups including bikie gangs and Asian or Middle Eastern crime groups to cooperate on drug importation, money laundering and violence.</p> <p>They are headed by senior figures with authority over their clans, keep a low profile and run businesses to present a legitimate front.</p> <p>Over many decades the illegitimate wealth gained from organised crime has been slowly legitimised through those businesses.</p> <p>“It’s entirely possible that people will be living next door to members of the ‘Ndrangheta without knowing,” Ryan said.</p> <p>“They’ve been able to stay under the radar while living modest lives in modest homes. They funnelled the illegitimate wealth into their legitimate construction, agricultural and catering businesses.</p> <p>“In many ways, I would say that the ‘Ndrangheta are actually the ones pulling the strings of other organised crime groups, particularly the more violent groups, such as outlaw motorcycle gangs.”</p> <p>Four years ago, an AFP-led covert investigation into organised crime syndicates trafficking illicit drugs and weapons called Operation Ironside was set up.</p>

At the heart of the operation was a dedicated encrypted communications device called ANoM.

Officers gathered intelligence from the ANoM app to understand how transnational serious organised crime syndicates – including the ‘Ndrangheta – operate and communicate.

Laws have since been passed providing the AFP with additional powers to identify and disrupt criminal syndicates.

“The (Surveillance Legislation Amendment Identify and Disrupt Act) warrants, coupled with intelligence collected from ANoM, have given us the best opportunity today to identify and pursue our next targets,” Ryan said.

“These targets now include Italian organised crime, namely the ‘Ndrangheta.”

Federal police will also look for individuals who facilitate money laundering, which is billions of dollars annually.

“The ‘Ndrangheta are not just an Australian problem, they are a global problem,” Ryan said.

“They are responsible for 70 to 80% of the world’s cocaine and they are flooding Australia with illicit drugs.

“They are pulling the strings of Australian outlaw motorcycle gangs who are behind some of the most significant violence in our communities.”

There are 51 Italian organised crime clans in Australia, and the AFP has confirmed that 14 of those are ‘Ndrangheta.

The Calabrian mafia is responsible for serious crimes committed across the world and the AFP is working with Italian, US, Spanish and Brazilian authorities to dismantle their finances, communications and operations.

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HEADLINE	06/06 AZ arrest: 19yr-old threatens mass shooting
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/arizona-man-arrested-accused-of-praising-uvalde-texas-school-shooting-pd
GIST	<p>CASA GRANDE, Ariz. - Police in Casa Grande say they have arrested a 19-year-old man for allegedly making terrorist threats.</p> <p>According to a statement released on June 6, officials said Joshua Adam Bowen was arrested near his home on June 5. An investigation into Bowen began after FBI officials contacted Casa Grande Police regarding online comments made by Bowen.</p> <p>"Bowen made various threats to harm people by mass shooting at a local high school, police station, and movie theater. He threatened family and friends and praised the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas," a portion of the statement read.</p> <p>In their statement, police did not otherwise elaborate what Bowen exactly said.</p> <p>Bowen, according to police, was taken into custody without incident.</p> <p>"Although there were no weapons found on Bowen at the time of his arrest, detectives were able to identify information that leads them to believe he may have access to firearms," read a portion of the statement.</p>

	<p>Officials said Bowen has been booked into the Pinal County Adult Detention Center, where he is being held on a \$150,000 bond. Charges will be forwarded to the Pinal County Attorney's Office for review.</p> <p>"There is no doubt in my mind this individual was intent on hurting people and, ultimately, would have found a way to do it," Casa Grande Chief of Police Mark McCrory said, in the statement. "Fortunately, we have great support at the local, state, and national level to identify these threats and in this instance these relationships functioned exactly as they should, and we were able to work together to stop a serious threat to our community."</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Spokane Co. found liable in jail death
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/video-in-spokane-county-jail-death-was-intentionally-overwritten/293-1124bd80-b976-46e4-a810-71750b394660
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — More than six hours of surveillance video from the Spokane County Jail, which was key evidence in a wrongful death lawsuit, was overwritten, according to federal court documents.</p> <p>A federal judge ruled that Spokane County was liable in the death of 55-year-old Cindy Lou Hill in August 2018. On May 9, 2022, a federal judge ruled that the county allowed the video to be overwritten through a process that automatically happens after 60 days. The judge said the county did so “with intent to avoid its litigation obligations.”</p> <p>U.S. District Court Judge Mary Dimke issued a default judgement against the county. At the trial on July 11, the county will not argue its legal responsibility for Hill’s death. The county will only be able to argue the amount it will pay in damages to her estate.</p> <p>Hill died of acute bacterial perionitis due to ruptured liver adhesions with a hole in the small intestine, according to the medical examiner's office.</p> <p>Hill was booked into the Spokane County Jail on Aug. 21, 2018 for drug possession. According to federal court documents, she told a nurse with NaphCare, the company the county contracts with for healthcare services at the jail, that she was a heroin user. Nursing staff then began periodic exams of Hill’s withdrawal symptoms.</p> <p>On Aug. 25, a nurse attempted to examine Hill just before 9 a.m. Court documents say Hill was complaining of abdominal pain that was so bad, she couldn’t make her way to the edge of her cell to be evaluated. Due to jail policy, the nurse couldn’t go into her cell without a guard. Hill’s cellmate dragged her to the door so the nurse could perform palpitations to determine how much pain she was in. According to documents, the nurse ordered that Hill be moved to the medical wing, where guards check in on inmates every 30 minutes.</p> <p>A camera in the medical wing of the jail captured Hill’s transfer at 9:10 a.m. The next available footage provided by the county from the same camera is recorded at 4:10 p.m. The county provided no explanation for the gap in video footage, documents say.</p> <p>Court documents say handwritten logs during that time show guards checked on Hill at 10:15 a.m., 11:09 a.m., 11:23 a.m., 12:07 p.m., 12:40 p.m., 1:10 p.m., 1:43 p.m., 1:58 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 3:20 p.m. The nurse said she tried to examine Hill sometime after 3 p.m. but she refused.</p> <p>Surveillance footage of the guards’ encounters with Hill were not preserved by the county, according to court records. However, video before and after Hill’s move was available. Video is available of guards attempting to contact Hill at 5:24 p.m. when she was found without a pulse and not breathing. Court documents say Hill suffered a ruptured intestine that caused gastric contents to leak into her abdomen, ultimately causing an infection that killed her.</p>

In depositions, then Spokane County Jail Director Michael Sparber and Lieutenant Don Hooper, who was assigned to the jail at the time, couldn't explain why the footage was not preserved despite it being standard procedure to do so following a death in the jail.

According to court documents, Hooper testified that someone at the jail "made the conscious choice to preserve only certain portions of the video from Aug. 25, 2018."

"If they don't record it in 60 more days, the officers that would've been in charge of recording it knew that it would write over itself," Hooper said.

Spokane County Detention Services only preserved video for the periods between 8:43 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. and 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Hooper confirmed that the footage between those time periods was "not preserved and can no longer be restored."

Sparber testified that it would not have been appropriate for jail staff to fail to preserve a portion of the video and that he would see "no reason for the video to be destroyed."

When the court asked the county's attorney for an explanation of why the video wasn't preserved, the attorney said "he wished he had some explanation for the court," according to court documents.

"Spokane County offers the court no explanation—credible or otherwise—about why someone at Spokane County Detention Services made the intentional choice to preserve video from 8:43 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., yet chose to allow the portion from 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to be permanently destroyed," Dimke wrote in her decision.

The judge's ruling doesn't impact the medical negligence and civil rights violation claims against NaphCare and the nurse. The attorney for Hill's estate argues she should have been seen by a primary care provider after complaining of abdominal pain. They also disagree with the nurse's account of the interaction with Hill during their 3 p.m. meeting, saying it was not consistent with the pain she would have been suffering from the ruptured intestine.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Arrests: 2017 quadruple slaying of family
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/3-arrested-in-2017-quadruple-slaying-of-family-that-owned-bremerton-restaurant/
GIST	<p>BREMERTON, Wash. (AP) — Three people have been arrested in connection with the quadruple murder five years ago of a prominent family that owned a restaurant in Bremerton, Washington, authorities said Monday.</p> <p>The Kitsap County Sheriff's office said a 43-year-old man and a 49-year-old man, both from Bremerton, and a 50-year-old Gig Harbor man face felony charges, ranging from first-degree aggravated murder, first-degree murder, first-degree arson and first-degree burglary.</p> <p>KOMO reports the three suspects, who were not immediately identified by authorities, were booked into the Kitsap County Jail.</p> <p>The charges stem from the slayings of Hunter Schaap and Johnathon Higgins, both 16; and Christale Careaga, 37, who were found inside a burned home on Jan. 27, 2017. A fourth victim, whose remains were found inside a scorched truck in Mason County, was later identified as John Careaga, 43.</p> <p>Kitsap County investigators had said they believed the murders were carried out by members and associates of the Bandidos Motorcycle Club, but it was not clear if the three suspects were linked to the organization.</p>

	<p>Bail for each of the three suspects was set at \$20 million, according to the sheriff's office. The three suspects were scheduled to be in court for an arraignment Tuesday.</p> <p>John Careaga and his wife, Christale, owned Juanito's Taqueria in Bremerton.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Trial: illegal horsemeat trafficking in Europe
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/06/horsemeat-traffickers-france-duped-owners
GIST	<p>When Aline Oudin was forced to find a new home for her beloved 28-year-old chestnut horse Ténor du Pluvinage, she placed an advert asking if anyone could offer him a new field to see out his final days.</p> <p>A man in his 60s responded saying he was looking for a calm companion for the young mare he had bought his daughter, so Oudin let him take the horse away with the promise she could visit him regularly.</p> <p>"Everything happened very quickly. I didn't have time to think. The gentleman liked Ténor and I gave him my trust ... I was in great distress at having to separate from my companion of 23 years," she said afterwards.</p> <p>"Seeing me in tears, the man comforted me and assured me that my horse would be well cared for and that I could come and see him whenever I wanted. That same evening, the man phoned me to tell me that the return journey had gone well. But when I called him back to ask for his name and address, his phone was on voicemail and then the line was disconnected."</p> <p>Oudin placed appeals and adverts to try to discover what had happened to her animal. Months later she discovered the horse had been sent to an abattoir.</p> <p>Nine years on, 18 people, including two veterinarians, are appearing in court in Marseille on Monday accused of involvement in a vast illegal trafficking network across Europe that allegedly supplied horsemeat unfit for human consumption to wholesalers and butchers.</p> <p>The defendants, from France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, are thought to have bought and sold thousands of retired draft horses and racehorses, and even ponies, that were exported to Belgium where they were allegedly given fake identification and tracking documents before being sent back to abattoirs in the south of France.</p> <p>They have been charged with fraud as part of an organised gang, or supplying false and deceptive goods liable to be a danger for human health, and face up to 10 years in prison if convicted. Eight of the accused have been in custody since 2015 after European police smashed the continent-wide network.</p> <p>Mathilde Bloch, the investigating judge, said detectives had shown "negligence or positive action showing the complicity of the two vets" accused of falsifying documents.</p> <p>Oudin, from Meurthe-et-Moselle in eastern France, is one of more than 150 horse owners thought to have handed over their old animals believing they would be looked after in their final years.</p> <p>"I learned after lengthy research that my horse had been killed when he had been given insecticide, worming and anti-inflammatory treatments that would have made him totally unfit for eating," she told French journalists. "I have been profoundly hurt. I had this horse for 20 years and he was part of the family."</p> <p>Lionel Febbraro, a lawyer for one of the veterinarians, blamed confusion over "incredibly complex" European rules for his client's involvement. "Even if I admit it can't be pleasant to learn that your horse has ended up at the abattoir, a priori, nobody died poisoned," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 UK supports, to help ICC war crimes probe
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/law/2022/jun/06/ukraine-uk-justice-ministry-more-support-icc-war-crimes-investigation
GIST	<p>The UK Ministry of Justice has announced a second tranche of support for the international criminal court's (ICC) investigations into war crimes in Ukraine, including the deployment of a specialist legal and police team.</p> <p>Karim Khan QC, the court's chief prosecutor, was due in London on Monday to provide an update on the progress of the investigation, although his trip was later cancelled due to illness. The deputy prime minister, Dominic Raab, will present further support to the independent investigation on top of the £1m of funding provided earlier this year.</p> <p>The package includes a police liaison officer based in The Hague to lead on information sharing between the UK and the ICC, and seven legal experts to support the ICC with expertise in international criminal law and the handling of evidence to be presented to court.</p> <p>The UK will also provide two police officers with expertise in the collection of intelligence through publicly available data sources, ongoing defence analysis and monitoring of events in Ukraine, as well as war crimes investigation training to Ukrainian police on behalf of the ICC, in collaboration with Norwegian police.</p> <p>"The UK has responded swiftly to a request from the international criminal court for more police and lawyers to aid their investigation into Russian war crimes in Ukraine," Raab said.</p> <p>"Russian forces should know that they will be held to account for their actions and the global community will work together to ensure justice is served."</p> <p>The attorney general, Suella Braverman, added: "Following my appointment of war crimes expert Sir Howard Morrison as an independent adviser to the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office, I am determined that British expertise continues to be available to our friends in Ukraine in their search for justice.</p> <p>"We will stand side by side as they uncover the truth and hold those responsible in Putin's regime to account for their actions."</p> <p>The ICC launched its war crimes investigation into Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March after an unprecedented number of countries backed the move and Boris Johnson called the military intervention "abhorrent".</p> <p>The referral by 39 countries shaved several months off the process because it allowed Khan to bypass the need to seek the approval of the court in The Hague.</p> <p>The British lawyer previously said the push for an inquiry by so many countries "allows us to jump-start investigations" and came on top of "evidence of international concern over events on the ground in Ukraine".</p> <p>"Individuals have rights to have their interests vindicated and for justice to prevail," he said.</p> <p>"That can only take place if evidence is independently and impartially collected and assessed and then, in due course, decisions can be made regarding whether or not there's criminal responsibility, and then the judges ultimately will decide."</p> <p>The ICC investigation will look back as far as 21 November 2013, when Ukraine's then president – Viktor Yanukovich – rejected closer integration with the EU, leading to huge protests that precipitated Russia's annexation of Crimea.</p>

	<p>Earlier this month, Braverman visited Ukraine and led a delegation of war crimes experts to the region to support the work of the Ukrainian prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, the Ministry of Justice said.</p> <p>It added that officers from the Metropolitan police's counterterrorism unit would "continue to provide forensic and technical capabilities, such as biometrics and examination of digital devices", as evidence is gathered from potential witnesses in the UK.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice is also accelerating conversations with City law firms and barristers to prepare for deployment at a later stage of the investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/05 Calif. teen arrested: school shooting threats
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/california-teen-arrested-allegedly-threatening-shoot-school-possession/story?id=85200062
GIST	<p>California police have arrested a 17-year-old who allegedly threatened a school shooting on social media. The teen, a student at Heritage High School in Menifee, California, about 75 miles east of Los Angeles, allegedly sent messages on social media that he planned to shoot "up a school" and "kids," according to a statement from the Menifee Police Department.</p> <p>The threats did not mention a specific school, police said.</p> <p>In addition to the threats of violence, the teen had allegedly been harassing students and was in possession of a "ghost gun," a privately manufactured firearm that is untraceable, police said. Ghost guns are typically created by assembling pieces, either sold together in a kit or separately, to create a fully functioning firearm.</p> <p>The kits can often be purchased without a background check and do not have serial numbers, making them accessible to people who are legally prohibited from purchasing firearms, including minors, according to the police department.</p> <p>Detectives who obtained a search warrant for the teen's home encountered him as he was returning home just before 2 p.m. Sunday and found the firearm, according to the police statement. Investigators are trying to determine how the teen got the gun.</p> <p>The suspect, who was not named, was booked into the Riverside County Juvenile Hall on several charges, including making criminal threats, possession of brass knuckles and possession of an unregistered firearm.</p> <p>The Perris Union School District was immediately notified and assisted detectives in the investigation, police said.</p> <p>"All threats, whether specific, implied or otherwise, that cause fear in our community will not be tolerated," the police department said in a statement. "MPD is committed to using all available resources to ensure we hold the person(s) responsible for such threats accountable for their actions. These threats are disruptive to our school sites and require many hours of law enforcement investigation."</p> <p>The school district did not immediately respond to ABC News' request for comment.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Arrest: student threatens school violence
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/edmonds-woodway-hs-student-arrested-after-credible-threat-of-violence-against-school
GIST	<p>EDMONDS, Wash. - Police arrested an Edmonds-Woodway High School student overnight after a threat was made against the school, according to a letter sent to families.</p>

FOX 13 News obtained a letter from Principal Allison Larson, who said there was a "credible threat of violence against our school.

"We never, ever not take a threat seriously. I think we can't on this day and age not respond to every threat as if it is potentially serious," said Greg Schwab, the Edmonds school district assistant superintendent.

The school is working with the Edmonds Police Department.

Police said Monday morning the 16-year-old student was booked in juvenile jail on suspicion of felony harassment. They also said a realistic-looking BB gun was recovered.

"We want to thank the students and families who reported information about this student's threat right away by calling 911. Actions like that are a critical part of our district's safety plan," Larson said.

Also in the letter, the school also said the "threat of violence may bring up different feelings for students and staff, especially following the mass school shooting in Texas just a few weeks ago. If your student needs support, please reach out to our counseling office.

"It's scary to think that because it's like something that we're not supposed to. It's our teenage lives, we're supposed to be thinking about having fun, going to school, basically having positive vibes, but it is scary to think about," said freshman Jazmin Marquez.

Additional police presence will be on school campus Monday morning.

For other threats or safety concerns, families and students are reminded to contact the school's staff directly, and if it's urgent to call 911.

Schwab said the next steps include utilizing the district's "threat assessment protocol," where the student's parents and teachers sit down together and discuss what happened.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Proud Boys in seditious conspiracy charge
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Proud-Boys-charged-with-seditious-conspiracy-in-17223129.php
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The former top leader of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group and other members were charged with seditious conspiracy for what federal prosecutors say was a coordinated attack on the U.S. Capitol to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.</p> <p>The latest indictment against Henry "Enrique" Tarrio, the former Proud Boys chairman, and four others linked to the group comes as the U.S. House committee investigating the Jan. 6 riot prepares to begin public hearings this week to lay out its findings.</p> <p>The indictment Monday alleges that the Proud Boys conspired to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power. Tarrio and the others — Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Rehl and Dominic Pezzola — were previously charged with different conspiracy counts.</p> <p>They are scheduled to stand trial in August in Washington, D.C.'s federal court.</p> <p>The seditious conspiracy charges are among the most serious filed so far, but aren't the first of their kind. Eleven members or associates of the anti-government Oath Keepers militia group, including its founder and leader Stewart Rhodes, were indicted in January on seditious conspiracy charges in a serious escalation in the largest investigation in the Justice Department's history.</p> <p>Three Oath Keepers have already pleaded guilty to the rarely used Civil War-era charge that calls for up to 20 years in prison. The indictment alleges that the Oath Keepers and their associates prepared in the weeks leading up to Jan. 6 as if they were going to war, discussing things like weapons and training.</p>

Tarrio, the group's top leader, wasn't in Washington, D.C., when the riot erupted on Jan. 6, 2021, but authorities say he helped put into motion the violence that day.

Police arrested Tarrio in Washington two days before the riot and charged him with vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic Black church during a protest in December 2020. Tarrio was released from jail on Jan. 14 after serving his five-month sentence for that case.

An attorney for Tarrio said his client "is going to have his day in court."

"And we intend to vigorously represent him through that process," said Nayib Hassan.

Defense attorney Carmen Hernandez, who represents Rehl, said her client is "as innocent of these charges as the ones that had already been pending against him."

"Seditious conspiracy requires the use of force, and he never used any force nor thought about using any force," Hernandez said.

More than three dozen people charged in the Capitol siege have been identified by federal authorities as leaders, members or associates of the Proud Boys, whose members describe it as a politically incorrect men's club for "Western chauvinists."

They have brawled with antifascist activists at rallies and protests. Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes, who founded the Proud Boys in 2016, sued the Southern Poverty Law Center for labeling it as a hate group.

The indictment alleges that the Proud Boys held meetings and communicated over encrypted messages to plan for the attack in the days leading up to Jan. 6. On the day of the riot, authorities say Proud Boys dismantled metal barricades set up to protect the Capitol and mobilized, directed and led members of the crowd into the building.

Prosecutors have said the Proud Boys arranged for members to communicate using specific frequencies on Baofeng radios. The Chinese-made devices can be programmed for use on hundreds of frequencies, making it difficult for outsiders to eavesdrop.

Shortly before the riot, authorities say Tarrio posted on social media that the group planned to turn out in "record numbers" on Jan. 6, but would be "incognito" instead of donning their traditional clothing colors of black and yellow.

Around the same time, an unnamed person sent Tarrio a document that laid out plans for occupying a few "crucial buildings" in Washington on Jan. 6, including House and Senate office buildings around the Capitol, the indictment says. The nine-page document was entitled "1776 Returns" and called for having as "many people as possible" to "show our politicians We the People are in charge," according to the indictment.

Nordean, of Auburn, Washington, was a Proud Boys chapter president and a member of the group's national "Elders Council." Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Florida, is a self-described Proud Boys organizer. Rehl was president of the Proud Boys chapter in Philadelphia. Pezzola is a Proud Boy member from Rochester, New York.

A New York man pleaded guilty in December to storming the U.S. Capitol with fellow Proud Boys members. Matthew Greene was the first Proud Boys member to publicly plead guilty to conspiring with other members to stop Congress from certifying the Electoral College vote. Greene agreed to cooperate with authorities investigating the attack.

	<p>Another Proud Boy, Charles Donohoe, of Kernersville, North Carolina, pleaded guilty in April to conspiracy and assault charges and also agreed to cooperate in the Justice Department's cases against other members of the extremist group.</p> <p>In December, a federal judge refused to dismiss an earlier indictment charging alleged leaders of the Proud Boys with conspiring to block the certification of Biden's electoral college win. U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly rejected defense attorneys' arguments that the men were charged with conduct that is protected by the First Amendment right to free speech.</p>
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HEADLINE	06/06 Proud Boys member faces sedition charge
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/proud-boys-leader-from-wa-faces-sedition-charge-in-u-s-capitol-insurrection/
GIST	<p>An Auburn-area man and prominent member of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group, already indicted as a leader of the 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, faces a new charge of seditious conspiracy among other allegations in the deadly insurrection.</p> <p>Ethan Nordean, 31, was among five Proud Boys leaders named in a new indictment handed up Monday by a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia. The new indictment adds three additional federal felony charges — seditious conspiracy, assault and destruction of government property — to the six that Nordean already faced.</p> <p>The sedition charges are among the most serious filed in connection with the Jan. 6, 2021, uprising. If convicted, Nordean and his alleged co-conspirators could face up to 20 years in prison on their sedition charges alone.</p> <p>In all, Nordean could face up to 50 years in prison if convicted on all counts.</p> <p>The new charges allege that Nordean — working with other prominent Proud Boy extremists, including the group's national chairman, Enrique Tarrio — “conspired to oppose the lawful transfer of presidential powers by force” through their involvement in the so-called “Stop the Steal” movement, in which supporters of former President Donald Trump claimed President Joe Biden was fraudulently elected in 2020.</p> <p>The indictment also names Proud Boys Joseph Biggs of Ormond Beach, Florida; Zachary Rehl of Philadelphia; and Dominic Pezzola of Rochester, New York.</p> <p>The new indictment states the conspiracy included “obtaining paramilitary gear and supplies” such as tactical vests and radio equipment to coordinate the Jan. 6 march on the Capitol with the intent to prevent Congress from ratifying the results of the presidential election. The indictment alleges Nordean was part of a hand-picked group of Proud Boys leaders who in the weeks leading up to the insurrection engaged in “encrypted communications” to plan the attack.</p> <p>Nordean, according to the indictment, creating a crowdfunding page intended to raise money for “protective gear and communications” for the insurrection. He also helped spread the word that Proud Boys were to dress “incognito” and avoid wearing their traditional yellow and black garb that has set them apart at other demonstrations, the indictment says.</p> <p>The indictment alleges Nordean — also known as “Rufio Panman” — flew from Washington state to the District of Columbia using a debit card belonging to a relative of Tarrio's, and had a number of online and in-person meetings leading up to the attack.</p> <p>After the FBI arrested Tarrio two days before the insurrection, Nordean and as many as 60 other Proud Boys joined an online group called “Boots on the Ground” that continued planning a march on the Capitol and congressional office buildings, according to the indictment.</p>

The night before the attack, Nordean and another Proud Boys leader sent an encrypted message to the group, telling members to meet at 10 a.m. on Jan. 6: “Do not be late! Do not wear colors! ... Come out as a patriot!” the message said, according to the new charges.

Nordean was one of more than 100 Proud Boys who gathered at the base of the Washington Monument that morning, the charges allege.

Subsequently, Nordean was captured on video leading a pro-Trump mob to the Capitol just before it was breached and ransacked, according to the charges.

The indictment alleges that Nordean and Biggs, another indicted Proud Boy, led the crowd as it tore down barricades separating the mob from law enforcement officials trying to protect the Capitol and the elected officials inside.

Nordean was included in a selfie-style video, taken that afternoon, in which Biggs declared, “We just stormed the [expletive] Capitol. Took the [expletive] place back. That was so much fun.” According to the indictment, Biggs then said, “January 6 will be a day in infamy.”

Charging documents identify Nordean as the self-described “Sergeant of Arms” of the Seattle chapter of the Proud Boys, a group known in the Northwest for street brawls and violent clashes with antifascist activists.

Calling themselves a “pro-Western fraternal organization for men who refuse to apologize for creating the modern world; aka Western Chauvinists,” the Proud Boys have been condemned as a hate group by extremist watchdogs, racial justice advocates and others.

Nordean is being held in a Virginia jail pending trial, according to his attorneys.

David Smith of Alexandria, Virginia, one of his attorneys, acknowledged the new indictment Monday but said he could not comment further.

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HEADLINE	06/06 Tacoma police arrest 4 teens in shooting
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article262213782.html
GIST	<p>A police dog tracked down four teenagers Sunday after they were suspected of firing at a vehicle and homes in South Tacoma.</p> <p>According to Tacoma police, residents in the 1600 block of South 47th Street called South Sound 911 just after 7:30 p.m. to report gunfire.</p> <p>Police said four juveniles were seen shooting at a vehicle before fleeing between residences. The vehicle fled the area. The gunfire struck two occupied homes.</p> <p>“One resident reported rounds had broken a window and lodged in a piece of furniture while they were in the home,” police spokesperson Wendy Haddow said in a release. “A second resident had rounds come through their living room wall a few feet from where they had been sitting. A third resident had rounds go through their fence.”</p> <p>Police dog Ice and his human handler, along with other officers, found the four suspects: a 13-year-old boy, a 15-year-old boy, a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy, hiding in a yard in the 1400 block of South 49th Street. They were arrested for investigation of assault.</p> <p>The juveniles surrendered when Ice entered the yard, police said.</p>
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